# FIRST CITIZENS AND OTHER FLORIDA FOLKS

## Essays on Florida Folklife

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Edited by
Ronald Foreman

A publication of the
Florida Department of State
George Firestone
Secretary of State

Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs
Division of Archives, History
and Records Management
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This public document was promulgated at an annual cost of $5,443.30, or $2.18 per copy to increase public awareness of the diversity of folk expression and the current range of folklife studies in Florida.

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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Main entry under title:

**First Citizens and Other Florida Folks**

(Publications of the Florida Division of Archives, History
and Records Management. Folklife, no. 1)
Includes bibliographical references.
1. Florida—Social life and customs—Addresses, essays, lectures.
2. Folklore—Florida—Addresses, essays, lectures. I. Foreman, Ronald, 1928-
II. Title.
F311.5.F57 1984 398.2.09759 84-12755

Publications of the Florida Division of Archives,
History and Records Management; Folklife No. 1

Cover:

Billy Bowlegs III (r) and Josie Billie (l)
Courtesy Florida Folklife Archive

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A book such as this anthology would not have been possible without the dedicated cooperation of many people to whom a major debt of gratitude is due. In its conceptual stage, the publication benefited from the suggestions provided by David L. Closson, Doris J. Dyen, and other folklorists on the staff of the Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs. Barbara Beauchamp, Andrea Graham, and Kip Lornell edited various drafts of the manuscript; and Yvonne Bryant, Linda Harris, and Sherry Tamburo labored to make the corrections in the successive drafts. Supplementary research was provided by the staff of the Florida Folklife Archive as well as Joan Morris and the staff of the Florida Photographic Collection. Randall Kelley and L. Ross Morrell reviewed the manuscript and contributed policy guidance toward its publication. Bob Bell and Gwen Montgomery set the type and developed the design for the final copy. Finally, the series editors, Peggy A. Bulger and Ormond H. Loomis, gave productive advice and support throughout the evolution of the work.

# INTRODUCTION: TINCTURES OF FLORIDA FOLKLIFE

*Ronald C. Foreman, Jr.*

Generations of natives, settlers, and visitors have acted as agents and reporters for the substance and style of the abundant life in Florida. William Bartram (*Travels*, 1791) praised the attractions of the Indian settlement Cuscowilla, perched near "a large and beautiful lake," where, in one direction, the sloping bank ran into an "extensive forest . . . of Orange groves, overtopped with grand Magnolias, Palms, Poplars, Tilia, Live Oaks and others." In the regions which he visited, Bartram made one of his many observations: his Indian hosts at Cuscowilla and "most of the lower Creeks or Seminoles" were "evidently tinctured with Spanish civilization."[1]

In the years since Bartram's inquisitive journey of the 1770s, the tincturing of a multicultural Florida stock has followed the paths of national and regional fortunes. Before Bartram, certainly, and before their territory became an official possession of the United States in 1821, the natives, blacks, and European settlers and sojourners had tended the foundation of a variegated territorial base. Beyond the 1820s, past the tragic wars waged against the Seminoles and the national struggle from which blacks emerged as free people, the successive descendant Floridians and newcomers served a composite heritage. As they met the challenges of their times, these first and emerging citizens preserved and gained knowledge of an historic lexicon, of patterned ways of doing and judging, of sites of grand history and memorable pockets of neglect, of the pursuits of work and leisure. Their lifeways and folkways affirmed a legacy with a special meaning for Floridians: the elements of diversity, survival, and change are bound to the quality and consequences of natural resources and climate, to the origins and continuing shifts of population groups, and to the achievements and promises which beckon others here.

The extended interleavings of Florida's peoples and cultures, of their enterprise and resolve are assuredly a collective acknowledgment of the essays gathered for this tribute to folklife in Florida. At the same time, the range of the topics and issues presented commends a considerate, supportive vision of the future of Florida folklife as well as a celebratory bow to its past history.

* * *

The materials of folklore, the objects, ceremonials, and behaviors associated with them, often are revealed through sharings among families, whose special qualities are shaped by a comradely response to others. In the thoughtful care of neighbor-reporters, accounts of the manners of life are doubly valued. The occurrence of one such interweaving of regard of neighbor for neighbor—white and Seminole—provides the entryway to "First Citizens of Florida." Here, Thelma Boltin traces the paths which crossed and ran together for Albert and Jessie DeVane and Billy Bowlegs III and tribesmen, who shared neighbors' friendships during nearly fifty years' residence in the Lake Placid-Lake Okeechobee country.

The occasionally complicating questions of *origins* and *definitions* offer a challenge to students and others who address issues of folk identity and history. Those who are intent upon sorting the folk elements and discovering the folk amidst a welter of products and types fashioned by the mass culture industry may discover, Patricia Waterman suggests, that the folk are *with* and *of* us. The pervasive sturdiness of traditional folk beliefs and forms of expression enables instructive comparisons across groups and over time; and "Who Are the Florida Folk?" reviews findings based upon a sampling of oral materials recorded by folklore students at the University of South Florida and archived there.

Statements which accompany the simplest images of states or regions employ widely recognized words and phrases: Lone Star, Sunshine, Empire, Volunteer, among such catch tags. To go beyond the evident components of Florida's most familiar face, Ary Lamme turns to views of Florida in historic and contemporary lives. In the first instance, "The Image of Florida" directs our attention to the resourceful leadership of a group of men and women whose perceptions of what Florida was and what it might come to be shaped their role in state growth and development. Thereafter, Lamme reports the perceptions of numbers of Floridians of today that they are residents of *locales*, of regions defined by and established within a vernacular consensus, for which circumstances of geography and enterprise bear much weight.

Statements by and about Floridians which are attributed to contemporary situations affirm the widespread appeal of story-telling and the (sometimes) tall tale. The range of topics and ties to story types familiar to tall-tale spinners and their audiences reflect the motifs and situations which attract listeners and, thereafter, turn them into bearers of tales. As yarns of an earlier age were occasionally intended to do, these anecdotes may trace annoyances of "modern" life or offer explanations for phenomena experienced or alleged to have occurred. Russell Reaver's "Florida in Contemporary Legend" illustrates the marriage of current lifeways and modern paraphernalia to traditional forms of story telling.

An understanding of the evaluation which some folklorists make of archival materials gathered in a much earlier day may assist us to understand decisions governing the frequency and the manner of the use of these older holdings. If the techniques and strategies practiced by field collectors of yesteryear were too often flawed, the retrievals credited to them deserve careful attention. Robert Thomson's article, "*Non nimium credendum antiquitati*: but don't throw the baby out with the bathwater," examines the possible benefits and the just cautions associated with the use of certain archival materials. Thomson compares older versions of two narratives—the legend of the Devil's Millhopper and a tall tale, "The Convivial Snake"—to versions more recently collected. The documents are a part of the archival preservation begun largely with the work of the late Alton Morris, English professor and folklorist at the University of Florida (1930-1973).

A larger document of the mode of life and concerns of community emerges from the composite of reports tendered as oral history. In the ledger which preserves accounts of community longevity, the fortunes of commerce, alterations of transportation and access routes, and calamitous departures from climactic or environmental conditions vital to agricultural or industrial enterprise have been entered as several of the factors which affect community stability. Outside the trends outlined in statistical enumerations and data, the expressions of those who have seen a community prosper then wane constitute the elements of living history and beliefs. Patterns of folkways and social organization course through the testimony gathered in "Lacoochee: Florida Lumbertown." Loretta Van Winkle's essay proposes our greater familiarity with traditional communities as a prelude to understanding origins and maintaining continuities in our present age.

Vitality is a quality of life in many Florida communities, but the vitality of Florida's children requires its own portrait. From the games of words-and-movement, calling into service as they must, rhythms, gestures, and steps; adroit management of body limb; verbal declamations, routines, and improvisations; and expressive challenges and parries, a folklore of exceptional range and vibrancy emerges. The newcomer—to school, neighborhood, country—is thrust into the stream of community life which is the province of children. In this place, the conventions, the style, and the appraisals which govern their lore and games are displayed and affirmed. The opportunities which children have, through their folklore, to establish comradeship across cultural boundaries are profitable ones, Allan Burns reasons. His essay, "Join the Circle: The Folklore of Florida Children," gives attention to the forms of children's folklore, to the enrichening of lives which may spring from sharing that lore, and to ways of broadening community familiarity with and reception of the treasure of the folklore held among our children.

Whether observations about the traditions and folklore of Florida focus upon native stock and original settlers, communities and the lifeways of their citizens, current versions of older processes and earlier plaints, external visions of the state and those held within the populace, or the place of antiquity and the role of youth in our lives, a familiar challenge stands before us. Into the lives of all come the products and the influence of yet the latest meeting of a momentous technology with the hardware and lifeways of recent times. There is no shortage of puzzlers to accommodate the complexity of this age, but one question is important to many: what does and should the future hold for Florida folklife?

The alterations in Florida life already sustained or underway, Stetson Kennedy observes in "Folksy Florida: Wanted Dead or Alive?", do not of themselves predict a leveling of the pluralistic community which is the state's legacy. The commemorative celebrations and preservations which the state's constituent families conduct in partnerships with a number of allies and organizations are both evident and necessary. Yet, in times of tight budgets and growing claims upon the resources of public and private agencies, the professions of belief in the priority which the state's folk heritage and folk arts should have may be demonstrated in a variety of ways. For maintenance and the further working up of the rich folk tapestry which is Florida's origination and is its possession, many hands need a turn at the loom. Beyond all, Kennedy believes, Floridians must "let it be known that all cultures are equally welcome and free to grow beneath the Florida sun."

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[1] Mark Van Doren, ed., *Travels of William Bartram* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955; reprint of Macy-Masius edition, 1928). Bartram's full original title was *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges, or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Choctaws; Containing an Account of the Soil and Natural Productions, Together with Observations on the Manners of the Indians.*

# FIRST CITIZENS OF FLORIDA

*Thelma Boltin*

He was as big as all out-of-doors — as big as the state of Florida, his native state. Albert DeVane, for that was his name, was born in 1895 slap dab in the middle of Hillsborough County on a farm near Plant City. He was born into a pioneer Florida family of French descent (via North Carolina). His grandfather came to Florida in 1824 from Georgia.

Being a country boy born and bred, he lived close to nature, rambled the woods, and no doubt hunted and fished with the very Seminoles who became so important to him as friends and informants. As early as 1917 he knew Billy Bowlegs III, his best friend.

During World War I after graduating from high school, Albert enlisted in the U.S. Navy. After the war he chugged up to Gainesville in his Model T Ford. There he enrolled in the University of Florida College of Agriculture for one year. In 1920 Albert seized the opportunity to take a job at Lake Stearns, now Lake Placid, working for W.F. Coachman Consolidated Land Company which took over part of the vast land holdings of the Disston estate. He set out and managed a six-hundred acre citrus grove from 1920 to 1951 when he retired.

Shortly after Albert settled in the Lake Stearns area, Jessie Bell Raulerson, age fifteen, of Lake Butler, traveled by train down to visit her maternal uncle and aunt, the A.B. Davises. When Albert met her at a summer frolic, it was love at first sight. He reluctantly allowed her to return home — but not for long. They were married soon after she celebrated her sixteenth birthday.

The DeVanes lived in tenant houses in the groves. Three sons were born to Albert and Jessie Bell: George Albert, Jr., Jack, and Donald Dewey. It is safe to say that as they made their home in the area northwest of Lake Okeechobee, Jessie Bell grew up with the boys — camping out, hunting and fishing, making friends with Seminoles. The Indians were much at home among the bayheads that abounded in the area and showed the DeVanes the favorite waterholes that dotted the property.

Albert and Jessie Bell enjoyed visiting the camps of their Seminole friends. Always they went loaded down with candy for the women and children, fruit for one and all, and like as not a bottle or two of Pepto Bismol to settle their stomachs. It was a common practice for the Seminoles to drink and bathe in the waters of the drainage canals that flow through the reservation. Living in such close proximity to the Seminoles long before the 35,00 acre Seminole reservation was established in 1935, the DeVanes' interest in the Seminoles and their history grew, and their friendship deepened.

Their circle of close Seminole friends grew to include Billy Bowlegs III; Lucy Tiger, daughter of Polly Parker; Frank Shore, chief medicine man of the Cow Creek Tribe; Frank's wife Lottie; and the Shore children Geneva, Eddie, Brown, Jim, Nancy, Mary Jane, and Molly; Naw Haw Tiger and his wife Lucy; Josie Billie; and Billy Cypress. All were frequent visitors to the DeVanes' various homes. Always they came bearing gifts of such bounty as wild turkey, venison, bear meat, fresh-caught fish, and swamp cabbage. On every visit, Jessie Bell promptly cooked the presents and a batch of her big fat biscuits and served them to Albert and the visitors. The DeVanes enjoyed the spontaneity of these visits. They often recalled, for instance, how colorfully garbed Seminoles appeared unannounced one morning to help out. Down on hands and knees, the Seminoles quietly sprigged a lawn where not a blade of grass grew!

Wherever the DeVanes lived, Albert's big old battered pedestal table of metal and formica — the type commonly found in roadside cafes — was the center of action. It might occupy the breakfast nook if there was one, the end of the kitchen if space permitted, or one side of the dining room. There Albert sat. His elbows boasted big thick calluses developed through years of leaning on that table as he ate, drank, talked, read, and tended to his correspondence. He spent hours at the table examining maps of early military posts and roads, and perusing books by the score on early Florida and the Indians. His library contained books like *Bartram's Travels*, Sprague's *History of the Seminole Wars*, Minnie Moore Willson's *The Seminoles of Florida*, Samuel Drake's account of the Seminoles back to the Creeks. As his library grew, so did his correspondence. The table wasn't big enough to hold it all. Nor could the table hold the conversations with old timers, historians, newspaper reporters, and his Seminole friends — especially Billy Bowlegs III, Lucy Tiger, Frank Shore, and Josie Billie. Albert marveled at the day-to-day history of the Seminoles and stowed away in his head and in pasteboard boxes what he learned. He scrawled notes, filled countless cartons with unedited material, took thousands of pictures, and in later years used his tape recorder as often as he could.

And Jessie Bell? She protested some of his "foolishness." She would remark, for instance, that "He doesn't have just one print made. He orders a dozen of each negative to scatter around."

Over the years the DeVanes acquired hundreds of acres of ranch lands and selected the site where their dream house was to nestle, a beautiful bayhead on their ranch. Plans for that home were drawn up (and changed from time to time). The dream became a reality in the late 1950s after Albert's retirement. The DeVanes' homeplace was located in plain view of State Road 70 as it snakes its way to Okeechobee and Brighton, the largest of the Seminole reservations in Florida.

Enter the DeVane ranch house. Albert's study to the left was filled with the genealogical papers of his family and other settlers; rare books and maps detailing the locations of old roads, Indian trails, sites of early military forts, battles, trading posts, and burial grounds; and various related items — all unedited and unfiled. He was busy collecting, and so was Jessie Bell. The library was filled to overflowing with memorabilia, and the ranch house was finished with a windowed extension off the kitchen to accommodate Albert's table.

Albert had long since found there was little published information about the Seminoles surviving after their tribe's final forced exodus (about 1858). The handful left — about one hundred — had retreated deep into the Big Cypress Swamp in southern Florida, and even when they began to have contact with the whites, they told little of their personal day-to-day history and life.

Albert began to fill in the gap. He hired interpreters with fair success. He gradually acquired a working knowledge of the unwritten Seminole language. Through Minnie Moore Willson's *Seminoles of Florida*, Albert learned that as a young man his friend Billy Bowlegs III was a frequent visitor to the Willson's home in Kissimmee — that Billy and members of his clan were principal informants for her. She describes the dress of the Seminoles before the turn of the century:

> The hair is cut close to the head, except the traditional scalp lock of his fathers, which is plaited and generally concealed under the large turban that adorns his head.
>
> The dress of the Seminole chief consists of a tunic embraced by a bright sash, close fitting leggins of deer skin, which are embellished with delicately cut thongs of the same material, that hang in graceful lines from the waist to the ankle where they meet the moccasin. The moccasin is also made of deer skin and covers a foot shapely and smaller than that of the average white man. A picturesque feature of the dress is the turban. Oriental in its effect, it has become the emblem of the race. It is worn almost constantly; and is made impromptu from shawls or colossal handkerchiefs wrapped round and round the

> head and then secured in shape by a band, often made of beaten silver which encircles the whole with brilliant effect. With young braves the more important the occasion, the more enormous the turban. Another characteristic of the dress is the number of handkerchiefs worn, knotted loosely about the neck. Regardless of the temperature, the Indian adorns himself with six, eight or perhaps a dozen of bright bandannas, exhibiting great pride in the number he possesses. A belt made of buckskin completes the costume. From this are suspended a hunting knife, a revolver, a pouch in which is carried the ammunition and small articles necessary for the chase.
>
> . . . The dress of the squaw is very simple, consisting of a straight, full skirt, made long enough to hide the feet. The upper part of the dress is a long sleeved, loose fitting waist, which fails to meet the waist band of the skirt by about two inches; this oddly fashioned garment is cut large enough in the neck to be put on or taken off over the head. A large collar, fashioned after the collarettes worn by the fashionables of the season of 1896, completes the toilet. A Seminole woman wears no head dress of any description . . . . Neither do they wear moccasins, at home or abroad, in winter or in summer. They are always bare-footed.
>
> . . . She affects the bang and the psyche knot . . . Silver breast-plates, made from quarters and half dollars, beaten into various designs add to their personal adornment on festal occasions. What the turban is to the brave, such is the necklace of beads to the woman. It is her chief glory and is worn constantly. Her ambition seems to be to gather as many strings of these brightly colored beads about the neck as she can carry, often burdening herself with several pounds. Even the wee tots are adorned with small strings of the much prized necklace.[1]

As the DeVanes gained the confidence of their Seminole women friends, they garnered great knowledge from them of these early citizens of Florida. According to Jessie Bell, the beautiful bright colored long skirts were originally creations of twentieth century Seminoles. Pieced together from bands of intricate patchwork, rickrack braid, and narrow handturned braiding, the skirts are part of a modern costume which is topped with a harmonizing transparent cape, itself trimmed with coarse lace, rickrack, and narrow bands of fabric. When worn by the women and girls, this costume is accented with dozens of strands of bead necklaces.

The Singer Sewing Machine Company made portable handturn machines especially for Seminole trade. Deaconess Harriet Bedell, Episcopal Missionary to the Tamiami Trail Miccosukees (1925-1965), is credited with getting Singer to supply these hand-operated machines. The Seminoles like these machines as they never use chairs in their chikkees. A hand-operated machine lets the seamstress sit crosslegged on the floor with the machine on a wooden box or low bench in front of her.

Seminole men's clothing includes patchwork, too. The women (and some few men) make beautiful patchwork-trimmed shirts that men and boys wear like jackets over a T-shirt or simple shirt. No matter how modern their clothing, the males wear one earring in a pierced ear just as their forebears did. On special occasions like the Green Corn Dance, the older men wear their feather-adorned turbans. Usually though, the men and boys now commonly wear jeans, all sorts of store-bought shoes, and cowboy hats.

Seminole men and boys have every right to wear cowboy attire! They belong to the Seminole Cattlemen's Association, a cooperative with a representative appointed to their tribal council. The Seminole nation owns about five thousand head of cattle. The original herd was bought by the government from the Indians in the dust bowl area around 1930 and brought to Brighton. It was charged to the Seminoles to be paid for in twenty-five years, but in twenty-four years the debt was paid. Since the stock belongs to the Seminole nation, every Indian owns a share.

Albert DeVane became interested in the Seminoles in 1915, and in Billy Bowlegs III in 1917. Billy was in his 50s, Albert in his 20s. Their friendship and close association covered half a century. Over their long years of friendship, Billy Bowlegs told Albert stories of his people and his birth.

Billy Bowlegs was a member of the Snake clan. The Seminole clan system is matriarchal; children belong to their mother's clan. Among the Seminoles living in his home camp of chickees were his grandmother, Old Nancy; her husband, Old Tony (a Creek); and three of her daughters. One of these girls was named Lucy, the mother of Billy Bowlegs III. With this family were Lucy's husband, Billy Bowlegs II; and Billy Fewell (Wind clan), sometimes called Key West Billy, son of Stuttering Billie (Otter clan). There were others living in the camp who had also married into the Snake clan. They were Charlie Peacock (Deer clan) and Olustee Micco, called Old Micco. Charlie Peacock was the grandnephew of Chief Chipco whose wife was a sister of Billy Bowlegs' mother. Olustee Micco's first wife was a daughter of Assinwah, an important leader or prophet. She was a sister of Lucy's who emigrated to Arkansas Territory at the end of the third Seminole Indian War. Olustee Micco refused to emigrate and, after Assinwah left, married a woman of the Otter clan. To them was born Tommy Micco who was the father of Chief Medicine Man Frank Shore of the Brighton Seminoles.

According to what Albert learned from him, Billy Bowlegs III was born on Arbuckle Creek where it runs into Lake Istokpoga, in a timbered point where his family was camped. It was October, and the family was on a bear hunt. Bear grease was important for it was the Seminole's main source of food for cooking, and at that time of year, the bear were feeding on low bush acorns and palmetto berries and were rolling fat. Billy was christened *Cofehatke*, Rabbit, of the Snake clan of royalty among the Seminoles. At a Green Corn Dance ceremony when he was about 15 years old, he was given the name Billy Bowlegs, after his father.

Billy grew up in the territory around Lake Istokpoga, Fish Eating Creek, Lake Okeechobee, and the Kissimmee River valley. When he was eleven years old, Billy killed his first deer with a muzzle-loading shotgun within five miles of his present home on Brighton Reservation. His grandmother tanned the deer hide and made Billy a pair of moccasins, or *Stil-i-pi-kaw*, and a pair of buckskin leggins, or *Aw-fa-tee-kaw*. Dressing Billy she said, "Billy Bowlegs, a mighty hunter." Her prophecy came to pass.

Early Florida was a sportsman's paradise. Billy Bowlegs III, the mighty hunter, told his friend and close companion of "a time when the land was thick with timber, wild places, wild game. Clouds of plume birds wheeled in the sky. Otter and fish made the waters alive."[2]

"Plenty deer, bear, alligator, turkey," Billy recalled.

> . . . One day he killed and skinned out nine deer . . . [and he recalled that during] that month "me killum 53 deer.". . . [Billy] hunted all over South Florida and was a familiar figure to the steamboat captains who plied the Kissimmee River. For years Billy sold them meat. He was a fine alligator hunter . . . [who could] make the deep throat clucking noises of "grunting up a gator" and . . . won a world's championship at Moore Haven for turkey calling.[3]

Billy became a mighty hunter, and his success was widely known. He was hired as guide by nationally known sportsmen in the early era of Florida. The list of people he led included author Charles B. Corey, Henry Flagler and his guests, H.B. Plant and his guests, and other sportsmen and men of science.

Billy was always courteous and friendly with his own people and his white friends. It is told that Billy taught himself to read, write, and speak English when it was frowned upon by his own people and his white friends. He would use a stick as a pen, berry juice for ink, and copy the labels on cans in trading posts. When his white friends saw how anxious he was to learn, they helped him. Around the campfire at night, hunters taught him his ABC's.

Eventually Billy Bowlegs ventured out of the Everglades to sell his deer and alligator hides and to trade and buy supplies. As a young man, Billy bought an ox which he rode and used as a pack animal. He trained him to pull a sled. Taking his ox, which wore a bell, to the outskirts of Ft. Pierce once, Billy turned him loose to graze and boarded a train for Orlando. In Orlando he purchased a new one-horse wagon, painted green with red wheels, for fifty dollars from Mr. Avery the manufacturer. Returning to Ft. Pierce, he went after his ox and yoked him up to his new wagon. Billy said, "I was then Mr. Billy Bowlegs."

Acquisition of an ox and wagon did not mean that Billy stopped using "Pet and Charlie" (his feet). Far from it. In *The Seminoles of Florida*, Minnie Moore Willson credited Billy with much of the information about the elusive Seminoles living in the Big Cypress Swamp. She included rare photographs of Billy Bowlegs in her work and gave the following anecdote which indicates how accustomed Billy was to walking.

> A few months ago, Billy Bowlegs and Tommy Doctor paid an unexpected visit to Kissimmee. They walked from their camp at Okeechobee Marsh, a distance of one hundred twenty-five miles to tell their white friend that "Indian no lie." This was all. They apparently had no other business in town, and after a few hours visit left as quietly as they had come. Their mission was completed — their white brother believed them, their honor was clear — they could now dance at the Green Corn Dance with merry hearts.
>
> A few months prior to this, these Indians had promised their white friend to act as guide on a bear hunt in the Everglades. All arrangements had been made for the hunt, except to fix the time and place of meeting. This was to be done through a white settler. Later, plans for the hunt were perfected and word was sent to the Indian village. According to their promise the Indians came to the settler's home on the day specified, but found that the white man had left his house early in the morning with no message as to how or where the Indians should follow. The Indians, not knowing which way to go to find the party, could do nothing but return to their camp — a distance of forty or fifty miles. Subsequent developments proved that the white man wished to act as guide, and thereby earn for himself the remuneration he expected the Indians would receive.[4]

Billy Bowlegs III grew into a fine figure of a man. Standing over six feet two inches tall, straight as an arrow, his was a commanding appearance. He was dark complexioned, eagle eyed, and he eventually wore a neatly trimmed mustache that turned white with age. He was the only Seminole who wore a mustache. Billy's vocabulary contained about two hundred English words, but he made good use of those. There were no curse words in the Seminole language, and though he heard them often, Billy never used any of the white man's vulgarities.

Billy Bowlegs III married Lucy, grandniece of Chief Chipco (Deer clan). Their only child, a son, is Eli Morgan. Since the heritage of the Seminoles is passed down through the mother or is perpetuated from mother to daughter to granddaughter, when Eli Morgan dies the Deer clan of the Seminoles becomes extinct.

Billy Bowlegs III's permanent camp was in the huge 2700 acre Brighton Reservation which was established by the U.S. government in 1935. The camp consisted of several chikkees. One was his sleeping chikkee with a well-constructed elevated floor, beautifully thatched roof of palmetto fronds, and the eaves well extended to keep out the rain. Under it he stowed his bed roll and plunder. Because he slept on a pallet on the floor, Billy's back was straight and strong. The dirt-floored cooking chikkee contained four palmetto logs, arranged like the spokes of a wheel, with a small fire burning at the center. On it sat the sofkee pot and the iron kettle coffee pot. Sometimes Billy said, "White man builds big fire, sits way back. Seminole build little fire, sit close," and he chuckled.

Billy's garden produced corn, sweet potatoes, cassava, sugar cane, and Indian pumpkin. He planted it with seeds passed down from his maternal grandmother and set them out in random hills where the sun would shine on them. It grew enough for the coons, the deer, and for Billy. His chickens roosted in the grove of trees that surround the camp and his pigs rooted freely around the camp and found shelter under the floored chikkee. The fat was cooked out and stored in hides made of tanned fawn deer skin to be used later.

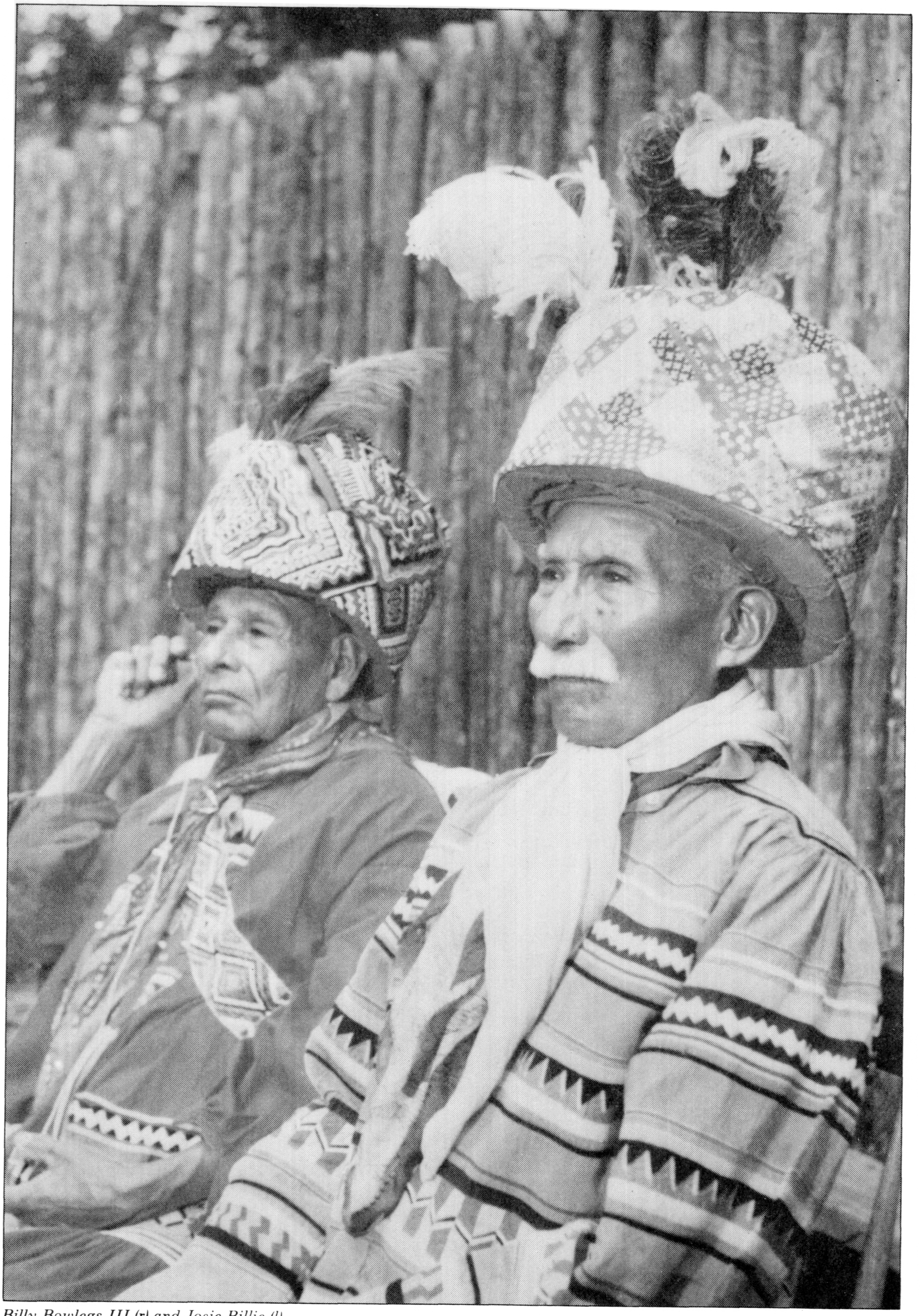
Greatness in simplicity characterized this first citizen of Florida. Billy greeted President Chester A. Arthur in the early 1890s when Arthur came to Florida for the start of Henry B. Plant's railroad from Kissimmee to Tampa. He paid tribute to President Herbert Hoover as well when Hoover came down to Clewiston in 1961 to be present at the dedication of Hoover Dyke, the levee around Lake Okeechobee. He was on the first train that ran from Homestead on the overseas railroad to Key West, this time in the company of his friend Henry Flagler in Flagler's private car. Billy visited Jacksonville first to be in a parade and later to appear on a local television special.

Billy Bowlegs III participated in the Florida Folk Festival in its early years. Billy Osceola, president of the Seminole Tribal Council, represented his people at the second annual Florida Folk Festival, planned, produced, and staged at the Stephen Foster Memorial on the banks of the Suwannee River during the first weekend in May 1953. An invitation to the DeVanes to take part in the 1956 and 1957 festivals brought them to see what the gathering was all about. They loved every minute of the festival, and in 1958 they arrived ahead of time with Billy Bowlegs III, Josie Billie, Lucy Tiger, Naw Haw Tiger, Chief Medicine Man of the Cow Creek Tribe Frank Shore and his family — all in beautiful Seminole dress.

Needless to say, the Indians caused a sensation wherever they went at the festival. Like most other participants they felt free to come and go. During the programs the men enjoyed sitting at the back of the stage with Albert, Jessie Bell, and me.

A passage in DeVane's *Early History of Florida* shows how Fran Mollnow, a reporter for *The Florida Times-Union* saw these special people:

> Billy Bowlegs III, the oldest living Seminole, sat through the festivities at White Springs' Florida Folk Festival with the impassiveness of a Biblical patriarch. From his expression and the aura of immense dignity that surrounded him, one would think that the performers had come to do him homage. Occasionally he would move his head in time to the music or smile benignly when someone came up to shake his hand. But for the most part he sat without moving, a monarch surveying his subjects.
>
> His costume was an anachronism blended with the 20th century. A turquoise cotton smock, full-cut and brightly striped, topped a pair of deerskin leggins he had made himself. His socks, which might have come from a mail order catalog, were turquoise to match his smock, with tiny red figures imprinted on the fabric. Instead of classic moccasins, his shoes were Army-style buckskin brogans. His headdress, a calico drumshaped turban trimmed with



*Billy Bowlegs III (r) and Josie Billie (l)*
*Courtesy Florida Folklife Archive*

> green and yellow plumes, topped his finely cut features.
>
> Behind gold-rimmed glasses, his eyes were as fathomless and dark as swamp water, watchful as a heron's. A white mustache, trimmed with machete precision, bristled against mahogany skin.
>
> Next to Billy sat a Seminole relative, 78 year old Josie Billy, an Indian medicine man and an ordained Baptist minister. Attired in a bright red smock the same style as Billy's, Josie wore a frayed silk scarf caught in a knot with a brass ring. He sat as benevolently as Billy, and tuned up his hearing aid when he found the activities to his liking.
>
> His shoes were black leather oxfords and he wore black nylon stretch socks. Like Billy, he wore a calico headdress and his skin gleamed like a pine knot beneath its protective canopy.
>
> On the other side, on a wooden deacon's bench sat a long-time friend, Mrs. Albert DeVane, as colorfully garbed as he. Together they watched the folk dancers skip about the marked-off square for performers.
>
> "Billy Bowlegs can understand English but he thinks in Mikosukee first, then he has to translate your questions into English. It takes him a long time. He's also hard of hearing. He knows everything that's going on, though, you can be sure of that," Mrs. DeVane said.
>
> Billy gave her a solemn glance. Then he turned back to the performers, intent upon their swinging rhythms.
>
> "Billy's practically a legend. He was when I first knew him 40 years ago." . . . Mrs DeVane thought for a minute, then came up with another memory. "You know what kind of a man Billy is? Every kind of good. He says something, he keeps his word. Honor is the word, I guess. He's respected. Even now, when the men on his Reservation — that's Brighton — hold council, Billy always sits in. His presence is necessary to them."
>
> . . . Like many another Indian, Billy is a curious mixture of tribal life and the modern world.[5]

Traveling from Brighton Reservation to the Stephen Foster Memorial at White Springs, just thirty-five miles from the Georgia line, wasn't easy. Three cars and an early start were mandatory. Frank, Albert, and Jessie Bell drove. They needed room for lunches, Lucy's fruit jar of sofkee, Seminole crafts, suitcases, other plunder, as well as passengers.

At the Memorial, firm arrangements to feed and house the group had to be made. Foster Barnes, then director of the Foster Memorial, provided for special fish meals to be prepared at the snack bar for the Seminoles. The whole east side of the former Miami Motel was reserved for them. Klysta Wimmer at the motel enjoyed putting them up. She observed that there were "no beds to make: they sleep on the floor!" It was Klysta, a former milliner, who concocted a turban for Billy Bowlegs III when Albert discovered that Billy's important headdress had been left behind. Using a plastic ice bucket, bandanas, and ostrich plumes, she made a turban that Billy wore with great pride.

The DeVanes and the Seminoles never hurried home. They would stay to allow Frank, Billy, Josie, and any others who wanted to tag along to gather herbs and roots in the vicinity of White Springs. They collected sassafras root, stinging nettle, polecat bush or black-root, rabbit tobacco, leaves from Christmas holly, sweet gum, camphor, cedar, snakeroot, butterfly flower root, and others.

Jessie Bell, while this was going on, often took some of the children and Josie Billie to Lake Butler to visit her parents, the Raulersons. Once Josie made up a pot of rheumatism medicine for Mr. Raulerson. Josie gave directions: "You drink 'em, pat 'em on where hurt. Bye 'em bye you feel good." En route home the party always stopped at Micanopy to trade in Mr. Thrasher's general store. There was no need to hurry.

When Billie Bowlegs III died on February 14, 1965 at his own camp on Brighton Reservation at the age of 103, he was readied for burial by the Okeechobee undertaker under the close supervision of his guardian and long time friend, Albert DeVane. The grand old patriarch of the Seminoles was dressed in brand new buckskin britches, colorful Seminole shirt, medicine man's coat, beaded sash four inches wide, and several 'kerchiefs given to him by Boy Scouts. On his head was the beautiful turban complete with plumed bird feathers Albert had made for him with Jessie Bell's help. In the casket were a complete change of clothing, dozens of 'kerchiefs from his Scout friends, food for the journey to the Happy Hunting Ground, and a fifth of "Old Granddad." Today a marker stands as a memorial to Billy Bowlegs III at the intersection of S.R. 78 and U.S. 27, the juncture of the road leading to Ortona Cemetery and one of Florida's main arterial highways.

Albert DeVane died suddenly of a heart attack in Arcadia on August 10, 1969, four years after his friend Billy Bowlegs III passed away. Albert is cited in *Who Was Who in Florida* as noted historian, genealogist, and historian of the Seminoles.[6] The Florida Historical Society saluted him for his collecting and preserving early Florida history. Both the Peace River Valley Historical Society and Sebring Historical Society bestowed their Florida History Award citations upon him. A resolution was introduced in the Florida legislature commending Albert DeVane for his outstanding achievements as a scholar, collector, and chronicler of Florida history.

Prior to her death in December 1976, Jessie Bell made arrangements for Sebring Historical Society to edit and publish Albert's best collection of material. Important to the publication in addition to Albert's material are the articles by his brother, Park DeVane. Each brother had his major interests, but they worked closely together. They shared knowledge each had acquired. Jessie Bell's request became reality: *DeVane's Early Florida History* was published by Sebring Historical Society in 1978. Billy Bowlegs III, Albert and Jessie Bell DeVane — there's no doubt about it: they are truly first citizens of Florida.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Minnie Moore Willson, *Seminoles of Florida* (Philadelphia: American Publishing House, 1896), pp. 60-62.

2. Mike Morgan, "At 100, Billy Shows His Age in Pride and Dignity," *Miami Herald*, February 15, 1962, in *DeVane's Early Florida History*, ed. Sebring Historical Society (Sebring, Fla., 1978), n.p.

3. Ibid.

4. Willson, pp. 64-65.

5. Fran Mollnow, "Billy Bowlegs at the Florida Folk Festival," *The Florida Times-Union*, June 2, 1963, in *DeVane's Early Florida History*, n.p.

6. Henry S. Marks, ed., *Who Was Who in Florida* (Huntsville, Ala.: Strode Publishers, 1873), p. 86.

# WHO ARE THE FLORIDA FOLK?

*Patricia Waterman*

To European scholars of the nineteenth century, the folk were peasants, rural people clinging to ancient survivals. To the founders of the American Folklore Society in 1888, the folk were the possessors of a fast vanishing lore. To some American scholars of the early part of this century, the folk and their traditions had been lost in the Americanization process. But by the third decade of the century, fieldworkers had discovered and recorded the folk — in Texas and the Ozarks, in Appalachia and in Florida. The Florida "Cracker" — hunter, fisher, farmer, and cowboy — immigrant from the British Isles by way of Georgia, epitomized the local Florida folklife tradition.

But Florida in the 1980s is the land of tourists, retirees, and new immigrants, of rapid population growth and urbanization. Under the impact of formal and popular, mass-transmitted culture, it is increasingly difficult to discern the folk. Perhaps if we were to follow the lore itself we would find and identify the people. Anthropology students of folklore at the University of South Florida in Tampa often find the first field collecting experience difficult.[1] "I don't know any folklore" or "Who are you calling folk?" alternate with "If only you had come last year when old Aunt Martha was alive." Yet the student archives now contain thousands of folklore items, items passed orally or by demonstration from generation to generation and from person to person, in traditional forms exhibiting distinct versions and stemming from anonymous sources.

The entire folklore verbal spectrum is here. Common is the *legend*, those prose narratives told as true stories. Frightening creatures abound as in the story about the Taylor Wild Man associated with Taylor, a juncture south of the Okeefenokee Swamp near the Osceola Forest.

> The Taylor Wild man is believed to be hairy and wild looking. A logger who was working late one night in the woods found that he couldn't start his pulpwood truck. Looking behind him, the man sees the Taylor Wild Man, and the logger runs away into Taylor and safety.

The collector noted that his informant heard the tale in Macclenny, Florida and that there are many more locally told stories about the Taylor Wild Man who "may be an insane person running wild, having extra adrenalin because he is insane."

The classic *urban legends* circulate in elementary schools and on college campuses. Along with the "Bloody Hook" and the "Vanishing Hitchiker" is the "Fatal Hairdo."

> The story concerns a girl in a high school during the late 60s who has a bouffant [bee-hive] hair style. During class the girl discovers that blood has trickled down her forehead. Her hair was never washed and was gunked up with hairspray. She faints and is taken to the hospital where, because her hair is stiff and sticky, it is cut. A couple of roaches are seen to be munching on the girl's scalp.

The collector of this version of the "Fatal Hairdo" notes that "The young woman who related the tale heard it from a female friend in Tampa who said she had been in the same high school class as the girl of the story." *Ghost stories*, usually localized, are told at slumber parties and summer camps.

> One dark evening in November a man lost his keys along a railroad while walking home. Later that evening he went back to look for them with his lantern,

> and was struck down by a train and decapitated. It has been told that around November, you can see the headless man walking up and down the railroad track searching for his keys.

The female informant was "convinced that this headless man's ghost did indeed haunt the town and . . . to this day has not gone near the tracks."

*Religious legends* and *memorates* are narrated in various ethnic communities. Here is one from the village of Corthios on the island of Andros, Greece.

> This is a religious superstition. They are very superstitious and believe in miracles. The most holy person in Greece is the Holy Mother. On the island of Tinos there is a shrine to the Holy Mother erected during WW II. Two bandits went to the shrine and stole the icon of the Holy Mother and Child. The icon was made with solid gold and inlaid with diamonds and rubies and supposedly blessed by one of Christ's disciples. Upon taking the icon, the church bells of the shrine started to ring by themselves and on their escape route through every village the church bell started to ring by itself. There are witnesses to it. The robbers got over to the island of her [sic] fathers and the church bells started to ring there also. It was a weekday and at noon and there was no reason to be at church at that time and for the church bells to ring. The thief was caught and as soon as the icon was replaced all the bells stopped simultaneous.

The collector, whose father came from Corinthos, comments that "Dad told him this and tells him this every year because in Greece it is the duty of the parents to inform the children of religious matters. Grandmother still tells him this and their father too. He said he believed this to have happened."

*Riddles*, traditional questions with unexpected answers, are one of the oldest universally told folklore genres. The oral tradition continues to be strong in a variety of groups and situations. The fourteen year old teller of the following example heard it at a junior high lunch table where classmates were sharing riddles after eating.

> What travels North, South, East and West, but goes neither on the ground nor in the air?
>
> —A fish.

From a different setting, here is a riddle from a young man who "heard it while in a Florida jail where the inmates had riddling sessions to entertain each other."

> A person comes into the jailhouse asking to see a certain person who has been arrested. The jailer stopped him and told him no one could see the prisoners unless they were a direct relative. Then the man replies with this riddle. "Brothers and sisters I have none, but the father of this man is my man's son."
>
> — The visitor is the father
> of the man in jail.

Traditional riddles are also passed down through ethnic groups. Here are a few brief examples. One is an Irish riddle that was told to the informant by her grandfather when she was ten years old, a short while after the death of her grandmother and before the birth of her younger brother.

Six set, and the seventh sprung, And from the dead the living come.
— A quail's nest in a horses skull.
There are six eggs in nest.
The mother bird flew away.

A second comes from a Cuban businessman.

En el monte hay un pomito que llueve o no llueve siempre esta lleno.
In the forest there is a bottle that rains or no rains always is full.
— El limon.
— The lemon.

The last is from an Italian-American woman who learned it as a girl in San Bendetto del Tronto, Italy.

Due lucenti, due pungenti, quattro zoccoli, E una scopa.
Two lights, two points, four shoes, and one broom.
— Il bue.
— The ox.

The collector points to the parallel English version, "Two lookers, two crookers, four standers and a switch-about."

*Catches*, verbal puzzles to trap the unwary participant, come even from a nine year old girl who caught her teacher with the following.

If a man dies in England who was born in China, reared in France, worked in America and married in Brazil, what is he?
— Dead.

Another standardized form is the dialogue type, told as a series.

| | |
|---|---|
| How do you spell joke? | — J-O-K-E. |
| How do you spell poke? | — P-O-K-E. |
| How do you spell smoke? | — S-M-O-K-E. |
| How do you spell the white of an egg? | — Y-O-K-E [if the catch works.] |

But then who would spell A-L-B-U-M-E-N with such a set-up?

*Logical puzzles*, whose answer can be worked out from the information given, have been collected from a number of informants, the youngest being a 5th grade girl.

A man is driving his car when he comes on an automobile accident. Since he is a doctor, he stops to help and discovers the injured person is his own son. He rushes his son to the hospital where the boy is taken into surgery. Another doctor enters and says, "I cannot operate on him. He is my son." How can this be?
— The second doctor is the boy's mother.

Another bit of cultural conditioning revealed?

*Joke riddles* are popular, too. Typical, from a third grade girl is this example.

> What is black and white and red all over?
> — A skunk with diaper rash.

There are many versions of this black and white riddle and the fact that the older listeners' traditional answer is wrong adds to the teller's pleasure. Current among the older set is the "How many _____ does it take to screw in a light bulb" form. It is illustrated by this version collected from a business man.

> How many real men does it take to screw in a light bulb?
> — None. Real men aren't afraid of the dark.

Another comes from a college student.

> How many psychologists does it take to screw in a light bulb?
> — Five. One to screw it in and four to experience it.

*Jokes* are an entire generic form too familiar to illustrate in this brief space. They can be collected from any age group, ethnic or occupational set; they are shared in many private and public places and reveal our deepest attitudes toward sex, ethnicity, religion, race, politics, and social taboos and frustrations. But other, sometimes overlooked, oral traditional materials also demonstrate the human penchant for language manipulation.

*Mnemonic devices* to aid memory circulate between students or between teachers and students at all levels of formal educational institutions. The first letters of the words in "King Philip Came Over For Good Sandwiches," and "Poor Cops Offend Friendly Girl Scouts" give the taxonomic classification of Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species. "Bad Boys Rape Our Young Girls But Violet Gives Willingly" recalls the first letters of the colors for the color coding of resistor bands: black, brown, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet, gray, white. "ELI the ICE man" suggests the sequence voltage, E, across an inductor, L, leads the current, I, by 10 degrees; and current, I, through a capacitor, C, leads the voltage, E, by 0 degrees. Another sentence, "Never Lower Tilly's Pants, Grandmother Might Come Home," gives letters for the bones of the hand: navicular, lunate, triangular, pisaform, greater multangular, multangular, cunicular, hamate. Less specialized are the memory joggers in rhyme. The most reported of these is used to distinguish the bands of the poisonous Coral snake from those of the harmless King snake.

> Red touch yellow, Kill a fellow.
> Red touch black, Friend of Jack.

*Tongue twisters*, difficult to pronounce phrases repeated rapidly, have been collected on school busses, movie theatre lines, and the front porches of the elderly. Along with Spanish and Persian examples, are the standard English twisters — and some new ones, too.

> Betty Bumblebee bit Barry very badly, but Barry bit Betty back.
> Blue Broadloom Rug.
> Quixote Quixet quizzed a querie's quizbox.

Double entendre forms are amusing to many.

> I'm not a fig-plucker, or a fig plucker's son,
> But I'll pluck figs 'till a fig-plucker comes.

*Folkspeech*, covering traditional words, expressions, and usages and including dialectical forms, such as naming, folk similes, and metaphors, is everywhere and requires only an attuned ear. One brief example comes from a native Floridian student using herself as informant.

> Yankee dime
> Usage: "I'll give you a Yankee dime if you will get me another cup of coffee;"
> or "It isn't worth a Yankee dime."

The collector commented:

> I remember my mother using this phrase when I was a very little girl. Sometimes if she wanted me to do something for her, she would offer me a "Yankee dime" for it. A Yankee dime is a kiss. Other times the phrase would be used to indicate the value of something. She learned it as a child in rural Florida where there was intense and real dislike against people from the northern United States who were always referred to as "Yankees."

This sampling of oral genres, even excluding the wealth of children's counting-out, jump rope and other game rhymes that continue to thrive, demonstrates something of the vitality of folk tradition in Florida. But perhaps more surprising is the continued functioning of other customary elements of folklife and their strength in city and suburb. We turn to two of these.

The use of *folk remedies* cuts across ethnic, age, and occupational groups. This stream of traditional medicine parallels the use of doctor-prescribed and patent medicines. The reliance on natural ingredients includes a wide variety of herbs, trees, shrubs, fruits, ashes, kerosene, urine, animal fats, vinegar, bread, spirits, and oils ingested or used as a poultice to cure everything from bee stings to the common cold. It is difficult to measure the degree of actual dependence on folk medical procedures, but a considerable number of informants indicate either belief or a suspension of disbelief in their efficacy.

Many remedies are magical, as with wart and stye cures. According to one informant, a man who worked with him and his father in Polk City told him, "when he was about 14 or 15, that to make a wart go away, you find the bone of a cow in a pasture, rub it on the wart, and throw it away over your shoulder." The informant said this remedy worked. Another informant learned this from an old woman in Dade City: "Borrow a dirty dishrag from a neighbor and rub it on your wart, then bury the dishrag behind your doorstep and your wart will go away." A cure for stys was learned by an informant in Dover, Florida. "If you have a sty to get rid of, go to the railroad tracks and say: 'Sty, sty, go away. Catch another one who comes by'." Another collector's mother and grandmother had both tried the following cure although they were uncertain whether it worked or not. "Stand at a crossroad and say: 'Sty, sty on my eye, get on the first person that passes by.'" Perhaps a sequence first learned in Cuba is most effective. The informant indicates that this remedy works, although she does not know how or why.

> 1. Obtain a white thread and tie nine knots on it.
> 2. Each knot is given the name of a particular individual who is not a family member.
> 3. Each day the afflicted individual should rub one of the knots on the sty. While rubbing the knot one should pray that as the knot rots, that the sty will disappear from one's eye and reappear on the individual named.

Finally, the persistence of *folk custom*, especially the celebration of calendrical holidays like Thanksgiving, St. Patrick's Day, and Passover, and rites of passage such as birth, puberty, marriage, and death demonstrate the tenacity of family and ethnic culture. Those that include the processing and preparation of folk foods seem most enduring. Floridians can prepare a wide variety of foods from hominy, gopher, and chitterlings to sauerkraut and kosher chicken soup. Part of an interview with a young Iranian woman student will demonstrate.

> In the first day of the first month of the Spring our New Year starts. *Farvardin* is the name of the month. We make a table with seven items which start with the letter S which may include *seke* [money], *sabzeh* [wheat germ], *somag* [spice], *senged* [nuts], *serke* [vinegar], *seir* [garlic], *seib* [apples]. On the table we also place the Koran, a picture of Ala, some flowers, decorated eggs, candles and special candy [*nogl*]. This is the time all friends meet each other and celebrate the New Year. We cook special food for New Years, rice with fish.
>
> *Rice:* 2 cups rice [*basmati*]
> 3 cups water
> 2 spoons salt
> mint, parsley, another dry vegetable.
>
> I put two cups rice in water for four or five hours before cooking it. Fill half of the pot with water and boil it. Drain the rice and put into boiling water. Add salt, stir. When the rice is done with tasting it (not too soft or hard), rinse in strainer and wash. Put four spoons of oil in a pot, herbs, and then all the rice with more oil on top. Cover with a piece of cloth and lid. Cook 30 minutes. The bottom of the rice will become crusty.
>
> *Fish:* We use white fish from the Caspian.
> Cut fish up and fry in butter.
> Serve with rice and lemon.

The informant showed me a photograph of the table she prepared for her husband and friends, and promised to show me one of the much larger table her mother in Teheran had arranged.

This concluding item, a recipe for cooking garfish, shows the American talent for parody:

> Garfish: First you catch a big gar. Clean and wrap it in two or three palmetto leaves. You have to bake the whole thing for three or four days buried underground before it's ready. When the thing is done, you dig up the gar, unwrap the fish, throw away the gar and eat the palmetto fronds.

When this item was told to an older student he said we had it wrong because he had heard it years ago from "some old guy in a Louisiana swamp" and it was about how to cook possum.

With this highly selective sampling in mind, we return to the initial question, who are the Florida folk? If we recognize folk groups by their distinctive usages we see that they are age groups, occupational groups, ethnic groups, religious groups. We see they are not necessarily isolated or unsophisticated or homogenious. We may assume that the folk are to be found in families, in neighborhoods, in clubs and associations. Folk groups overlap, and their lore both intermingles and stretches far back into the past. To understand the functions of folk tradition in binding social groups and the degree to which it carries influence in contemporary Floridians' lives, we must view the folk as being not just rural folks, but all of us — including you and me.

## FOOTNOTES

1. The diligent students whose collections are cited in this article include: Gary Adams, Cara Birardi, Enrique Cordero, Lori Cortese, Cynthia Etchison, Karen Fultz, Toby Frost, Tom Jackson, Robert Mayer, Julie Moxley, Charles Newsome, Johanna Newton, Kathy Pearman, Rodney Perry, Elizabeth Redmond, Michelle Richardson, Jeffry Rogers, Gay Salter, Grey Scaff, Kathy Staffa, Elizabeth Swann, Roberta Vinciguerra.

# THE IMAGE OF FLORIDA

*Ary J. Lamme, III*

Florida, the sunshine state. Just the mention of the name conveys a particular idea to many North Americans as well as visitors from around the world. The state's name has become synonymous with warm weather, retirement, and vacations. This idea, or image, of what constitutes Florida is an important characteristic of the state. For many who travel or live in Florida the image becomes a self fulfilling prophesy. A positive expectation can't change the weather, but it can get one in the proper frame of mind for a vacation. Ultimately the State of Florida benefits economically because millions of people hold a positive view of the state as a place to visit.

The image of Florida is not really as simple as the phrase "sunshine state" might tend to convey. For the tourist it may be enough that there is a high probability of good weather during certain seasons of the year. For others different images may be important. For the prospective businessman thinking of starting or moving a business to the state, the image of Florida as an important segment of the "sun belt" could be decisive. The "sun belt" with its increase in population and attractive working environment offers a good business climate. The "sun belt" is a generally positive image.

There are other images that are neutral or have different value orientations for different people. For instance, Florida has areas that are linked culturally with the states north of the Mason-Dixon Line as well as areas that are very "southern." Depending on where a person comes from, one of those areas of the state may seem more attractive for settlement or vacationing. Moreover, Florida has significant ethnic communities and these communities attract some individuals but not others.

At the present time such impressions of Florida are held by various people throughout our society. These ideas provide what can be regarded as mass cultural images. It is possible to consider other dimensions of the perception of Florida by looking at images of the state during other times and from a local, or folk, point of view. In fact, this exercise is quite useful for the person interested in the heritage of the state.

Florida has had an unusually long and varied cultural history. The oldest continuously occupied city in the United States, St. Augustine, was founded by the Spanish in 1565. The date was almost half a century before the founding of the first permanent English settlement in 1607 at Jamestown in Virginia. During the four hundred years of settlement in Florida, many images of the peninsular area have been held by varied populations. The perception changed according to the times, the cultures that originated them, and the purposes of the people.

It is obvious from a brief consideration of the image of Florida that the topic is complex, and that a full consideration of it could require volumes of text. Every individual who has heard of the state has an impression of Florida that would vary in at least a few details from those held by others. We certainly cannot survey the images of Florida held by all individuals through all time. We can, however, sample some of the varied images of the state. The remainder of this article reviews private and popular perceptions of Florida. It looks at five views that were held by five individuals who made important contributions to the state, and concludes with a survey of regions of that state that are perceived by Floridians today.

### Pedro Menendez de Aviles — The Spaniard

The early Spanish image of Florida is best investigated through a review of the motives and actions of the man who led the successful settlement mission to St. Augustine. By the middle 1560s Pedro Menendez was already a well-known military commander. The Spanish had made several attempts to settle the peninsula of Florida, but these had failed. Their motivation was to control more land area at the edges of their existent empire in the Caribbean, Central, and South America.

Philip II of Spain asked Menendez to assess Florida as an area of potential Spanish settlement. Menendez replied with his vision for the area. First he emphasized the importance of holding the coastal regions as a protection for the Spanish treasure fleets that sailed nearby. Menendez was particularly concerned about a threat from the French who were known to control areas further to the north. Menendez also suggested that a sea passage to the Pacific could be found in the area. He was not referring to the present day Florida peninsula with this suggestion, but wanted to control a much larger area of the North American continent. A third reason that Menendez gave the King for settlement was the agricultural potential of the area. And finally, in the Spanish mode of settlement, he referred to the fact that Jesuits would come on the mission to spread the Roman Catholic faith.

Menendez was authorized to undertake a settlement mission to Florida. He signed a contract with the throne which specified that he would pay for the privilege of settling the new land for Spain and in return would receive a large share of the profit.[1]

The early Spanish image of the Florida peninsula was that of a private entrepreneur looking at the potential of a virgin land. As illustrated by Menendez's efforts, the view combined an understanding of strategic location, a vision of agricultural potential, and the noble motives of service to crown and church.

### David L. Yulee — Public Servant

During the tumultuous years of the mid 1800s, many different images were proposed for those areas that were part of the region known as the "South." Although not a native of Florida, David Yulee had the vision and determination to strongly influence events in his adopted state during those times. Yulee was born of Jewish descent in the British West Indies. He attended law school at the University of Virginia and went to work on one of his father's plantations in Florida. He continued his study of law in Florida and became clerk of the territorial legislature. In 1841 he was sent to Washington as a delegate to Congress.

In 1844 Yulee argued in favor of statehood for Florida. His arguments reveal something of his vision of the future of the state. His first affirmative argument was a pragmatic political one. He maintained that statehood for Florida would maintain the sectional balance promoted by those individuals who were trying to avoid armed conflict between the North and the South. Next Yulee turned to the benefits in store for the proposed state. Over a half million acres of federal land would be transferred to the state, and he wanted the revenue from that land used to develop transportation. He maintained that education at all levels would be promoted by statehood, and this would be necessary for the increasing population that he expected. Finally, statehood would allow for true representation in Congress and self-government.

When Florida became a state, Yulee was elected to the United States Senate. At the time of secession, he resigned from the Senate and returned to Florida. His support for secession has been a subject of debate, with at least one biographer calling him a southern Unionist. When he returned to Florida, he returned to one of the great undertakings of his life. In 1850 he had spearheaded the development of a railroad across the state from Fernandina Beach to Cedar Key. He envisioned a major east-west connection across the peninsula for the transportation of people and goods from the Atlantic to the Caribbean Islands, New Orleans, and Central America. The railroad line was completed in 1860, but never became the major thoroughfare that Yulee had projected.[2]

The image of Florida held by David Yulee was a product of the man and his times. While his vision was not entirely realized, his advocacy of statehood indicates the considerable breadth of thinking which characterized individuals interested in the development of Florida before the twentieth century.

### Henry M. Flagler — Financier

A railroad was a key element to the image of Florida envisioned by another important decision maker. Henry Flagler was successful with his railroad and associated enterprises, and that success laid the foundation for the tourist and retirement activities in the state today. Flagler made his fortune in the oil business with John D. Rockefeller and others. In the late 1870s Flagler and his wife, who was in poor health, visited Florida in search of a mild winter climate. They traveled only as far as Jacksonville in the northeast section of the state, because travel south was so difficult.

After the passing of his first wife and his remarriage, Flagler returned to Florida in 1884. This time he reached St. Augustine, but again the trip was strenuous. It took over 90 hours of travel to get from New York to Florida, changing trains a number of times and eventually traveling across rivers by ferries and along a horse drawn trolley line into the old Spanish city. It was obvious to Flagler, a man of considerable vision and drive, that the development of the state was being held back by these conditions. Efficient transportation and better facilities for visitors would turn Florida into what he envisioned as an "American Italy."

In the years between 1885 and 1912, Flagler directed the construction of a string of grand hotels along the east coast of the state and the development of a railroad to facilitate traveling to those hotels. Of course the railroad not only served Flagler's hotels, it also stimulated the development of the entire Florida Atlantic coast. By 1912 the Florida East Coast Railroad ran all the way to Key West. Flagler came to Florida in his later years and lived for a time in St. Augustine. He took a philanthropic interest in this historic city and contributed funds for the construction of a number of churches.[3]

Henry Flagler's image of Florida was the image of a vacationland for a vibrant, industrializing United States. His concern with fast, efficient transportation to the peninsula and with elegant accommodations for visitors was the major stimulus for the development of vacation and retirement Florida.

### Mary McLeod Bethune — Educator

The railroad again had a role in the vision of the prominent black Floridian Mary McLeod Bethune. The free enterprise system so obvious in the careers of Yulee and Flagler would eventually support her vision as well. Born Mary McLeod, she was the 15th of 17 children. A number of her older brothers and sisters were sold as slaves before the end of the Civil War. As a child of unusual gifts, she was chosen to be educated as a Christian missionary. She found that there was no call for black missionaries in foreign countries, and in 1899 she came to Palatka, in northeast Florida, to start a missionary school. After several years she decided to found a formal educational institution for young black women.

Mary McLeod Bethune selected Daytona Beach as the site for the school. She thought that the majestic oaks of that part of Florida would provide an attractive site, but more important, her choice of site reveals her understanding of the economic development of the state at the turn of the century and her vision for the future of education for blacks. Daytona was chosen because it was at that time near the terminus of Flagler's Florida East Coast Railroad. She reasoned that the railroad was bringing a number of workmen and their families to the area. This migration would provide a fertile field for her endeavors. In addition, McLeod knew that there would be wealthy tourists in the area who could monetarily support her efforts. Hers was a new idea, to build a school where it could easily be seen by contributors.

On October 4, 1904, the "Daytona Literary and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls" opened with five pupils. In three years she had built a new school building and had over 100 pupils. Mary McLeod Bethune was successful in attaining support from businessmen such as James M. Gamble of Proctor and Gamble. Over the years the school developed into a four year liberal arts college known today as Bethune Cookman College.[4]

An integral part of Mary Bethune's image of Florida was an improved quality of life for black people, particularly women, through education and religion. By her actions we can see that she understood the economic development that was going on in the state. Her vision for Florida certainly was a positive one and one that Floridians could share with pride.

### Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings — Writer

In 1939 a novel full of Florida images won the Pulitzer Prize. The novel was *The Yearling* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. Rawlings was not a native of the state but had moved to the small north central Florida community of Cross Creek after the establishment of her literary career. She had worked for a newspaper and had written poetry, short stories, and even a cookbook. It was, however, for her novel of Florida pioneer life that she became best known.[5]

Although the novel was set in the nineteenth century, many similar physical and cultural characteristics were readily observable in the rural area in which she lived. Her descriptions of the land and the people vividly portrayed her observations of the state at a particular period and place. Passages such as the following from *The Yearling* described rural life:

> But in the towns and villages, in farming sections where neighbors were not too far apart, men's minds and actions and property overlapped. There were intrusions on the individual spirit. . . . The peace of the vast aloof scrub had drawn him with the beneficence of its silence. . . . Making a living came harder there, distances were troublesome in the buying of supplies and the marketing of crops. But the clearing was peculiarly his own.[6]

The peace of the countryside and the independence of the rural Floridian seemed ageless to those who knew such parts of the state.

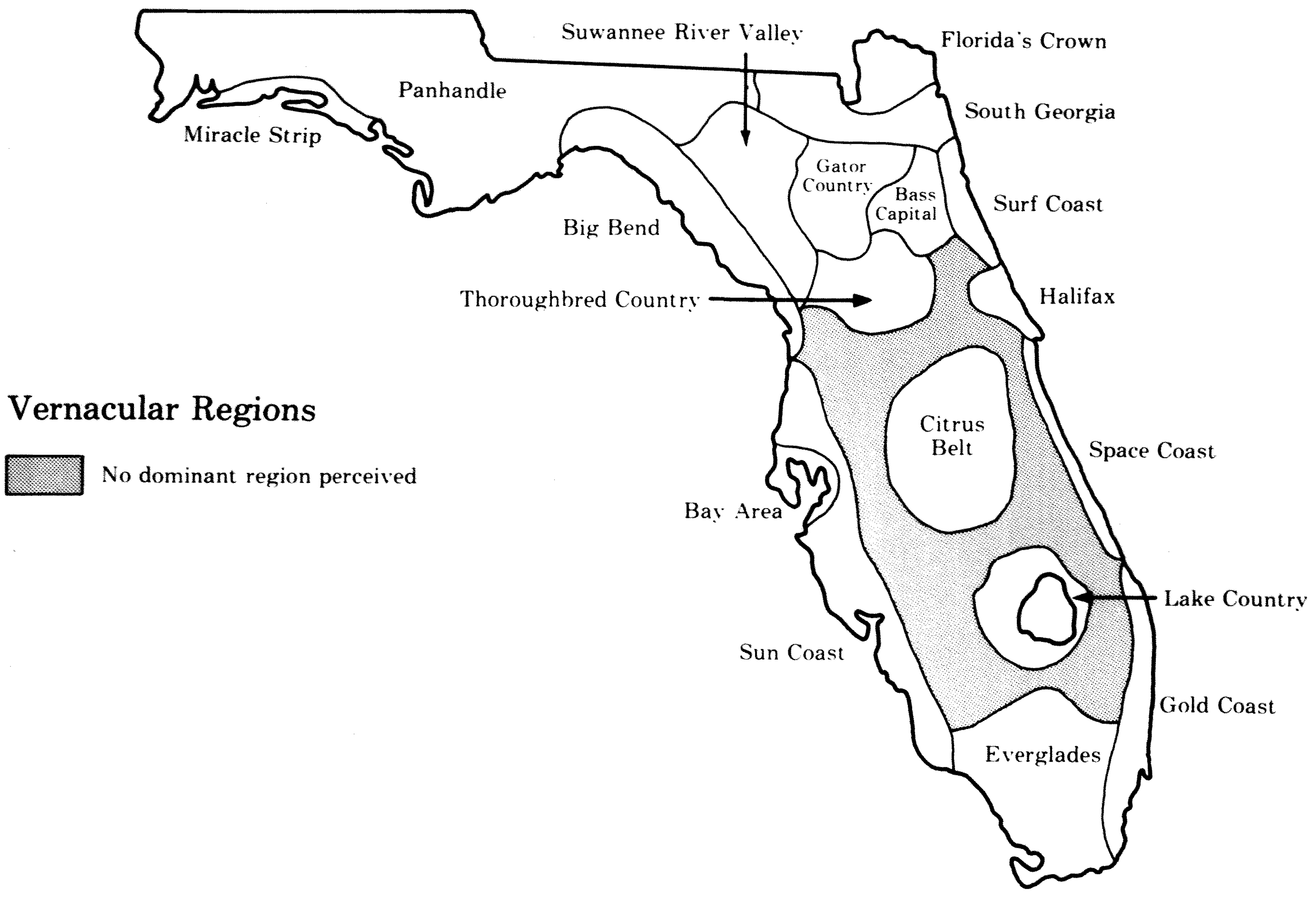
The Rawlings image of Florida is not that of the businessman or the tourist. Her writing gives an extremely effective accounting of pioneer and rural Florida and enriches our understanding of Florida's heritage.

### Vernacular Regions

The images of Florida held by the public are as varied as those held by the prominent individuals reviewed here. These are the images held by you and me. Since our expectations of the state have something to do with our experiences they are important. They are not, however, easy to survey.

A preliminary attempt to catalog these folk images was made through a survey of the public attending the Florida Folk Festival in White Springs over the Memorial Day weekend of 1981. In this research, survey participants were given examples of popular regions in other states and were asked to indicate any popular names which are used to refer to the area of their home residence. The slightly more than 350 respondents to the survey, from most areas of the state, gave responses which were analyzed and mapped (Figure 1).[7]

The survey reveals a number of vernacular regions, areas of the state that are indicated by having a commonly recognized name. Popular names are used by residents to refer to


Suwannee River Valley
Florida's Crown
Panhandle
Miracle Strip
South Georgia
Gator Country
Bass Capital
Surf Coast
Big Bend
Thoroughbred Country
Halifax
Vernacular Regions
▨ No dominant region perceived
Citrus Belt
Space Coast
Bay Area
Lake Country
Sun Coast
Gold Coast
Everglades

their home regions. They often are used by local businesses or organizations. According to the survey, at least eighteen popular regional names are used to refer to areas encompassing one or more counties in the state.

The Sun Coast was the most strongly perceived regional label and includes the counties of Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Sarasota, and Manatee. Within the Sun Coast exists a smaller Bay Area region. This term is used predominantly by residents surrounding Tampa Bay.

Three other coastal terms emerged. The Gold Coast, which primarily represents the perceptions of residents of Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties, is used to denote the high cost of living in these areas, as well as the supposedly glittering lifestyle. The Space Coast, a relatively recent name used primarily by Brevard County residents, is an allusion to the Kennedy Space Center which is located here. The Surf Coast is the term applied to the long strip of public beaches along the coastal areas of Flagler and Saint Johns counties. Miracle Strip is utilized by residents of southern Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton counties to describe the quality of the beaches in the coastal areas.

Residents of central Florida listed several popular regions. The Citrus Belt represents the perceptions of Orange, Polk, and Osceola residents. All three of these counties are major producers in Florida's citrus industry. Thoroughbred Country is the term used by Marion County residents in reference to large horse breeding farms located in the area. Residents of Alachua, Union, and Bradford counties used Gator Country to refer to their area of the state. This term is associated with the University of Florida, located in Alachua County, which employs the nickname Gators for their athletic teams.

Panhandle and Big Bend are two terms utilized by residents of the northwestern area of the state, and are an allusion to their shape in relation to the remainder of Florida. Another term based on the shape of the area, Florida's Crown, is used by residents of Nassau, Duval, and Baker counties. Respondents from this area also perceived themselves to be part of the South Georgia region. Suwannee River Valley, Halifax

(River), and Everglades are perceptual regions based on physical features found in these areas. Finally, a majority of Putnam County respondents perceived their area to be the Bass Capital of the World.

The coastal areas of the state tend to have vernacular names associated with their maritime orientation — names which are readily adaptable for promotional purposes. The interior of the state has several names reflecting the basic agricultural nature of the area. It is interesting to note that none of the names has a specific historical orientation. One would surmise that the tremendous influx of twentieth century migrants to the state has tended to obscure historic associations, at least as far as vernacular names are concerned.

### Summary

Images of Florida, whether held by prominent individuals or average citizens, are an interesting and informative part of Florida's cultural heritage. A long period of settlement relative to most other areas of North America, the extremely varied peoples who have come to the state during its history, and the orientation of a significant part of the state's economy toward a transitory population make Florida a unique setting. Its uniqueness is expressed in such impressions of and visions for the state.

This discussion touches on only a few images of Florida. Consideration of images of the state held by others broadens one's understanding of the state. Consideration of one's private image of Florida can broaden individual experience.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Eugene Lyon, *The Enterprise of Florida* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1976).
2. Joseph A. Adler, "The Public Career of Senator. David Levy Yulee" (Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1973.)
3. Sidney W. Martin, *Florida's Flagler* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1949).
4. Rockham Holt, *Mary McLeod Bethune* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964).
5. Gordon Bigelow, *Frontier Eden* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966).
6. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *The Yearling* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), p. 18.
7. Ary J. Lamme, III and Raymond Oldakowski "Vernacular Areas in Florida," *Southeastern Geographer* 22:2 (November 1982): 99-109. Much of the discussion contained here, as well as the map, is adapted from this article.
8. Ibid.: 105-107.

# FLORIDA IN CONTEMPORARY LEGEND

*J. Russell Reaver*

If you have lived in Florida very long, you have heard stories about family relatives and friends as well as community characters and places that pass for local history. From Seminole Indian creation stories through Spanish, French, or English adventure tales to the crucial events of the War Between the States, Florida folks tell you comic and tragic stories about themselves. But you may not have come across some of the most recent accounts of life in the Sunshine State.[1]

In St. Petersburg an episode about a strange encounter with a cat is told as a true event that happened to some friend or relative. It may be reported to have occurred one or another of several places around the city, although the favorite locale is the Central Plaza parking lot. Retold since the 1970s, this anecdote circulates at parties, coffee klatches, and civic club dinners.

In the Plaza parking lot, it is said, a woman ran over a cat while she was trying to park her car. Much upset by this accident, she got out of her car and put the poor dead cat in a clean shopping bag. She left the bag on the top of her car while she went to call somebody from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

While the first woman was gone, another woman came by, saw the deserted shopping bag, and took it off the car top. Hurrying into the old Wolfie's Restaurant with the bag, the second woman ordered a cup of coffee. Then she peeked inside the shopping bag to enjoy seeing her loot. Crying "Eeek" at the sight of the mangled cat, she fainted.

A waitress called an ambulance for the unconscious customer. As the woman was being carried out on a stretcher, the waitress noticed the abandoned shopping bag, ran out with it, and placed the closed bag on top of the woman's body so that the customer would find it as soon as she came to.

Many such stories are currently circulating through Florida. They give you the presumedly accurate reporting of an actual event in a familiar place. They are typical of the modern urban legend. Today you are more likely to hear tales about local, contemporary people than of chiefs and gods that used to be popular in Seminole legends of this region. In a way, these current adventures take the place of the historical or mythical exploits.

One tale told in Miami begins with a concrete-factory worker who drove home unexpectedly one morning to find a Cadillac car parked outside his house. When he looked through the kitchen window to see who could be there, he saw his wife standing close to a strange man. He was furious. To get revenge for his wife's secret affair, he returned to the factory and got his truck. Loaded with concrete, he drove back home and dumped the concrete on the Cadillac. When his wife faced him about the incident later that night, she explained with tears in her eyes that the man in the kitchen had been a car salesman. She had been buying the Cadillac as a surprise birthday present for her husband.

You may also hear in Miami the episode about the married couple who were poisoned when snake eggs sewn inside their electric blanket hatched out into snakes that bit them. Or you may be told about the doctor who discovered a woman patient who had nearly died from being bitten by a snake that someone had viciously sewn into the lining of her new fur coat. You will realize that some of these stories circulating among friends reflect the insecurity of city living and the feeling that few people can be trusted.

In Tallahassee several of my friends tell of the failure of a housewife to understand modern electrical equipment. She had been in the habit of drying her pet cat's fur by putting it in her stove oven for short periods. One day after washing her pet, she put it into the new microwave oven her husband had just given her. The new oven not only dried the fur, but killed the cat as well.

Urban legends, like all legends, are always told to be believed — at least while you are hearing them. But they further reveal the constant human impulse to embroider reality, to make it better or worse than it actually was. Hardly any retelling of personal experience — a car wreck, a love affair, a robbery, or a rape — remains close to the verifiable evidence. The events soon yield to everyone's tendency to want to tell a good story.[2]

Reality easily shifts to fantasy. In Winter Haven people tell of a man living near the city who liked the color black so much that he painted his house black inside and outside, used only black furniture, ate from black plates, and slept on black sheets. Along the Kissimmee River, campers confide the story of a wild hermit who has both of his legs cut off in such a way that the leather pads he wears on his knee stumps make fearful holes in the ground which are found when he is stalking intruders.

You will find such legendary lore, intended to frighten or amuse the listener, scores of times in similar tales that toy with reality among Florida folks. They may remind you of the older frontier "tall tales" of strong men, cattle rustlers, hunters, fishermen, preachers, drunks, and the like. Occasionally you can still hear the old tall tales remembered in country regions along with the more sophisticated urban legends. These legends seem to stretch the truth until it nearly tears.

Other recent favorites among Florida storytellers are such tales as the following. In Marianna people can explain that their courthouse clock never keeps correct time because a black man falsely accused of murder cursed the clock just before he was hanged. Near Delray Beach you will find that a reef along the Atlantic coast is haunted because residents during World War II were so obsessed with fear of local Japanese settlers that they killed a Japanese man and threw him to the sharks off this reef now called Jap Rock. You can hear about the Broomsage Cemetery near Wacissa. Area residents repeat tales of terrifying encounters with men and women, long dead, who are surrounded by such bright lights that they illuminate the whole cemetery. During the appearances no one can enter in a car through the gate because its motor always stops.

Key West, you will find, has its ghostly presence of Ilena, the beautiful Cuban girl treated by a German X-ray specialist. When he could not save her in the Marine Hospital, he brought her dead body first to a mausoleum equipped with a telephone over which he could talk with her spirit. Later he moved her to rest beside him in his bed while he experimented with a serum to mummify her.

Among the legends that circulate about ghosts are some associated with Florida's underground rivers, sinks, and springs. For example, there are the stories of a hermit, the "She-Man" of the Caloosahatchie River. A descendant of the pirate Morgan shot his son, hid the boy's body under a buried treasure chest, then beat his wife to death. He was left stranded when the family's pet alligator crunched Morgan and his murderous kin to death while they were trying to escape on a raft. Crazed by all these horrors, the lonely husband and father began wearing only his wife's clothes. He became known as the "She-Man" when people saw him roaming the river banks.

Crystal Springs near Inverness gives rise to another story you may find as part of Florida's underground adventure. In the springs a scuba diver encountered a nude figure that had long hair, feet with webbing between its toes, and gills through which it breathed. The creature turned out to be one Dr. Radcliff, a former biology professor from the University of Florida, who changed into a "Fish-Man" by testing fish hormones on himself. Radcliff had tried to prove he could reverse evolution, but no other people would allow him to inject the hormones into them. He is said to still inhabit Crystal Springs.

Many modern legends of Florida are told in a lighter vein than the horror tales. Along the same section of Atlantic shoreline where the haunted Jap Rock is found, you may hear that the area was the site of the Celestial Railroad. It was a narrow-gauge railroad with tracks running through Jupiter, Neptune, Mars, Venus, and Juno. If you are in the rural sections of Okaloosa County, you may hear folks tell of a mother who was annoyed by her young son's habit of sucking his thumb. One day she told him that unless he stopped he would get a big stomach like a local fat man who still continued to suck his thumb. A few days later when the boy saw a pregnant woman, he walked up to her and said, "Uh huh, I know what you've been doing!"

Dr. Ralph Eyman, the late professor from the Florida State University, has become the subject of a story about his picking up discarded camellias. He found them on two successive days along the sidewalk which he usually took home from work. Being a camellia developer, he thought he might graft or plant these rare specimens. Passing by the same place on the third day, he was surprised to find yet another camellia blossom discarded on the ground. When he bent over to pick it up, he heard a child's voice cry out from the shubbery, "So you're the one who's been stealing flowers from my cat's grave!"

Some of these modern stories keep alive real or imaginary heroes and villains in such a way that adventures of the characters give a bit of an epic feeling to figures. In the legends they are somewhat larger than life because of their tragic or comic dimensions. When you hear the full versions of stories that are summarized here, you will appreciate the capacity of Florida storytellers to excite your imagination.

But the range of Florida folk narratives extends beyond urban eccentric anecdotes supposedly factual reporting and the awesome legend of a suffering "She-Man" of nearly epic proportions. Some Florida legends verge on being narratives of creation. In the arcane area between fact and fancy, a few stories begin to have the aura of a mythic explanation of human existence. These recent accounts go beyond earlier Seminole Indian origin myths and the creation stories of black folks.

Actions in Florida lore combine the wonder found in the epic form with the divinity of the mythic form. Examples are found in such stories as you may come across when you visit Wakulla Springs and hear of Henry the Pole-Vaulting Fish. These narratives will take you to that mythical realm of pre-history when nature was suffused with magic powers. Henry's almost divine ability is repeated in the God-given creation of hushpuppies, which the Lord taught the black cook Rachel how to make on the shores of Lake Iamonia. The most elaborate modern Florida creation story comes from the region of Bristol where residents claim the original Garden of Eden was located. The claim is based on the resemblance of the local river system to the description of the Garden in the second chapter of Genesis and the fact that gopher wood, from which Noah's ark was built, grows nowhere on earth except between Bristol and Chattahoochee.

On an even deeper level of psychic symbolism, some aspects of the Florida landscape have been transformed into symbols of controlling significance because they have become charged with emotional meaning whether or not you may know the full story behind them. Two of the more recent examples are seen in Tate's Hell and the Cascade.

In ballad and tale, "Tate's Hell" introduces you to a seeming paradise where Tate, the lost hunter, lived with a beautiful giant woman until she became too much for him. When he tried to escape, he was bitten by a poisonous snake and left in a delirium until he was found with his black hair turned completely white. When you hear the varied adventures of young Tate, you will feel his Hell symbolizes the fear of the wild unknown swamps that lie inland from the town of Carabelle. On one side, Carabelle faces toward the river and gulf waters; but on the other it faces toward the dense inland swamps. Tate's Hell remains a lively metaphor of all north Florida wilderness.

The Cascade lies in the shadow of the skyscraper capitol. An uncompleted park around the Cascade is the setting of the legend of two able horsemen, one from the east, one from the west. Dr. William H. Simmons from St. Augustine and Mr. John Lee Williams from Pensacola, mounted their horses at their homes on a specified day, rode from sunup to sundown at the same rate of speed, stopped for a rest at designated intervals, and met three miles south of the present Tallahassee in the low coastal lands. They then rode north to the rolling hills farther inland where they found the beautiful forest waterfall that determined the site of the state capital. Although such a legend omits all the sufferings, delays, and quarrels of the men it epitomizes in many Floridians' minds the sense of a nearly sacred place.

The Cascade fell for many years among Tallahassee's seven hills which resembled the site of ancient Rome. Everyone enjoyed its beauty until 1880, when a Mrs. Lewis Lively committed suicide by drowning herself in the waters. Tallahasseeans became so alarmed that they decided to fill up the hillside with mounds of dirt so that no one else could kill himself there. Although they stopped the falls, they could not destroy its source, which still flows under the city.

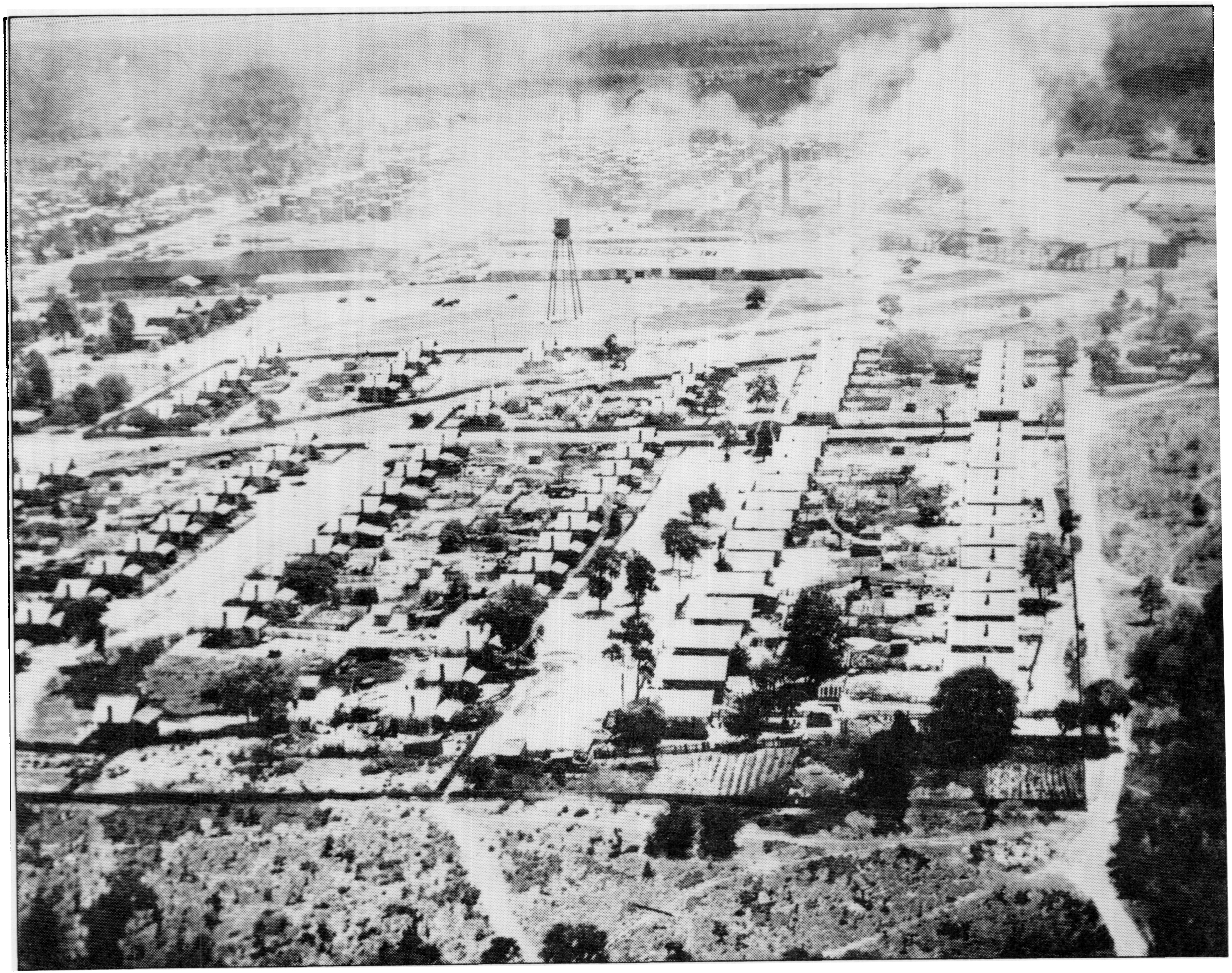
The Cascade in Tallahassee has become an even more powerful contemporary symbol of beauty and terror than Tate's Hell. These mixed legends about the Cascade help account for confusing delays in completing the Cascade Park and restoring the waterfall. Today no one uses the cleared land, left vacant and dry. Although it doesn't exist now, the Cascade has become another Florida symbol of success and defeat. The birth of the Florida capital and the death of a Florida woman mingle in the ambiguous feelings some people have toward the Cascade. Unverified in history and nonexistent in geography, this waterfall holds in citizens' emotions the tragicomedy of Florida life.

## FOOTNOTES

1. I am grateful to the Florida storytellers who have shared their tales with me, especially the following: Helen Atwater (Chattahoochee), J. Ed Bell, Jr. (Tallahassee), Robert M. Boggs (Tallahassee), Marianne Browning (Lovette), Bill Bunker (Madison), Irene Burton (Tallahassee), Jo C. Campell (Panama City), Forrest Chapman (Sarasota), Tom Crawford (Inverness), Sara Crittenden (Arcadia), Marvin Cunningham (Tallahassee), Mary Jane Davidson (Ft. Pierce), Marie Enno (Tampa), Elsie Farmer (Miami), Peter Findley (Ft. Myers), Gerry Gordon (Tallahassee), Sidney Grovenstein (West Palm Beach), Francis B. Harris (Tallahassee), Boots Haynie (Clearwater), Tom Hays (DeLand), Barbara Hudnall (Marianna), Lewis Hughen (Tallahassee), Gloria Hunt (Tallahassee), Dan R. Johnson (Bradfordville), Alvidra F. Johnson (Tallahassee), George Key (Key West), Gloria King (Tallahassee), Wilda Larson (Tallahassee), Marie Locklin (Jay), Thomas Looney (Tampa), Esther C. Maglathlin (Tallahassee), Newell Martin (Tallahassee), Cornelia McCreary (Jacksonville), Faye P. McKay (Tallahassee), George Milton (Marianna), Frankie Mitchell (St. Petersburg), Arthur Moore (Tallahassee), Edris Morgan (Tallahassee), Pat Murphy (Brooksville), Gene Nabi (Wacissa), Dorothy Osborn (Miami), Helen Osborn (Miami), Sara Jane Pilcher (Laurel Hill), Charles Rawls (Lake Butler), Nancy N. Rood (Jacksonville), Carlotta Smith (Quincy), Martha Spencer (Laurel Hill), Virginia Spencer (Tallahassee), Phyllis Stephanie (Pensacola), Nancy Stevens (Tallahassee), Melba Stokes (Graceville), Flora Stout (Pensacola), Hettie Syfrett (Chipley), Judy Taylor (Eustis), Louise Tillery (Winter Haven), Elizabeth Vaviloff (Kissimmee), Inez Walker (Wakulla), Nancy Watkins (Key West), Helen Weaver (Tallahassee), Alice Welch (Sarasota), Clara Williams (Winter Beach), Faith Williams (Delray Beach), Jane Wimberly (Port St. Joe), Mildred Winfield (Tallahassee), Barbara Wood (Tampa), Elizabeth H. Wood (Tampa), Betty Woodall (Tampa).

2. The most recent urban legends continue to flourish in newspaper stories about neighborhod gossip with always anonymous sources. Among the best newspaper releases in Florida is "Those Folk Stories of Old Have See City Lights," *Tallahassee Democrat* (December 26, 1981), mentioning tales of the cat dried in the microwave oven,

the woman bitten by a snake in her new coat, and the concrete-filled Cadillac. Rumors of the dead cat in the grocery sack appeared in the *St. Petersburg Times* (October 2, 1972) as "A Dead Cat Tells No Tales." Jan Harold Brunvand comments on some earlier urban legends in *The Vanishing Hitchhiker* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981).



*The town of Lacoochee around 1939*
*Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection, Florida State Archives*

# LACOOCHEE: FLORIDA LUMBERTOWN

*Loretta Van Winkle*

From the early 1920s to the late 1950s, Lacoochee, Florida, was the center of a large logging, lumbering, cratemaking, and veneermaking operation. During this period Lacoochee was transformed from a small farming community of several households to a lumbertown of several hundred households. The fabric of this culture was altered constantly by population shifts, the Great Depression, World War II, German prisoners of war, and finally by the closing of the mills.

Looking closely at this lumbertown may provide some answers about people generally. What is the reaction of a small native population to a large heterogeneous immigration? How do people adapt to one another's cultural ways and the threat these ways sometimes represent? What are some of the social tools a population uses to form itself into a community, allowing that a community is a dynamic balance of racial, social, and psychological flux? Oral histories from former residents of Lacoochee contain insights into these questions.[1]

Lacoochee was set among the gently rolling hills and forests of eastern Pasco County. Prior to the establishment of the lumber mills, Lacoochee was small but not as isolated as one may imagine. In the early part of this century, Lacoochee was a rail stop and boasted a combination depot, general store, and post office. This connection to the "outside world" made Lacoochee part of a network of even smaller outlying settlements.

During a recent interview, Benta Clements remembered her father's business shortly after the turn of the century. "My daddy had a store. He run a store, and he was depot agent and postmaster. People would come here from Clay Sink to trade. Besides father's store, and the post office, and depot, that was *it*!" Significantly, Mrs. Clements added, "There wasn't no work here when I growed up."

Many of the people who came to Lacoochee moved directly from other lumber operations. Shortly after the turn of the century, for example, Jason McElveen began working for Cummer, or "Sumner," a lumber camp owned by Cummer and Sons Cypress Company.

> In 1922, Mr. Mathias [a Cummer official] come over to Sumner and was talkin' to me. He give me a big red bird dog. The prettiest dog you ever saw in your whole life. The "tale" goes with the dog . . . to wag. But he says, "McElveen, we're going to build a mill at Lacoochee." He says, "I want you to get out the lumber to go over there to build the mill. I want choice lumber. I want it shipped over there. You know how to ship it." Well, that's what we figured out, how much they could use. And we shipped it just like they could use it so they wouldn't be overloaded with any one kind at a time.

When that job was completed, it was time for Mr. McElveen to move on.

> There was a little man, the superintendent then. He came around to me out there one day, and he says, "McElveen, don't you go lookin' for no job nowhere. When this job here gives out, and you tear them houses down, and load 'em up and ship 'em out, get on the train or get in your car, and come on down to Lacoochee. I'll have you a job down there waitin' for you."

Like many retired Florida lumbermen, Jason McElveen took great pride in his past work. "I am a lumberman, a good one. I'm old now, but I was a good lumberman . . . knew the lumber."

The early lumbertown looked rather desolate to people coming from big cities. Miriam Pire remembered her first impression of Lacoochee when she arrived with her family from the busy town of Jacksonville, shortly after the mill opened.

> We came in on the train. My father met us, and there was just sand everywhere. It was just an old sand hill. There were no trees, there was no grass, there were no streets, there were no sidewalks, there was no anything but sand . . . . [We] came out to Lacoochee, and, oh, it was like the tail end of nowhere.

Hazel Brannen, who still lives in Lacoochee, recalled her family's move. "September 1926, Labor Day, we moved here . . . . My Daddy had been a farmer in Williston, and he just wasn't making it. Of course, this was spoke of as the land of opportunity." One man's wages were hardly enough to support a large family, so "the older children worked, too."

Viola Grant's husband was told as a young man, "Son, you ought to go to Lacoochee . . . . There's money on the *trees*." The jobs attracted hundreds from all over the South, but the migration to Lacoochee created a collection of strangers who could have been incompatible.

Nevertheless, as Miriam Pire recalled, "It was a wonderful place to grow up. Everybody was friendly, and it was a close-knit bunch of people." How did all of these strangers become a community with shared traditions and values? "I'm quite sure," she said, "that the fact that there was not a whole lot to do, nowhere to go made people closer." Brannen observed that "we would gather at the different churches, and our life kind of centered around the activities of the church." According to Pire,

> Almost everybody went to one of the churches . . . . When you get a church group together, they're going to knit into a close group . . . . I think the churches did more of the shaping of the social structure than even the jobs people had, because I think that in the churches all of the women worked together.

Many of the South's oldest traditions were useful in reinforcing community bonds. "We had box suppers, and picnics, and ice cream socials, and such things as that," said Pire. Hazel Brannen described one specific type of party in detail.

> We had what you called "pound parties." When you went to a pound party, everybody carried a pound or the equivalent of a pound of something . . . . See, that wasn't no expense to anybody 'cause everybody brought something, and the one that gave the party would have it in their yard. They'd build up a big fire, and we'd stand around that fire, and play games, and eat this food we'd all brought. Whoever gave the party would furnish the drink. Nobody had much money, but to me, we did not have big "I's" and little "you's" in town. Everybody loved everybody.

An important form of entertainment in the hard working town was the "picture show." Brannen also told how Gene Autry and other singing cowboys regularly lifted Lacoocheeites from the little southern town to the wild west but perhaps the transition wasn't all that profound. Silas Green and his minstrel show and small circuses stopped occasionally as well.

> That's what Lacoochee always looked like . . . just an old Western town. But we had two movie houses and that was really what we had for entertainment, unless a medicine show came to town. They would put on quite a show for us and sell their medicine that cured all ills. Carnivals came once in a while.

A local form of entertainment was located at the drug store. Pire explained that "Abe's Drug Store was the hangout for all of us. We stayed at Abe's about as much as we stayed at home, I think. He was like a second Daddy to all of us." Mr. and Mrs. Abraham immigrated from the Middle East and settled with their family in Lacoochee. "Abe" livened up the slow pace with his never ending practical jokes and good nature.

> Abe was just the best old thing. Everybody loved him. We just loved to go to his drug store. I don't know the ice-cream cones that man give away to children . . . . If a person needed medicine or anything, Abe was right there. If they didn't have the money . . . why he gave them the medicine, and they paid him when they wanted to. He was just a nice . . . I don't know how to say it, but he made everybody feel good, and everybody loved him. His drug store was a place of treasures. He sold everything in there. My husband even bought my engagement and wedding ring from Abe . . . . Abe was just kindness.

Viola Grant, the mother of Mudcat Grant, the well known baseball player, felt there was "something here about the peoples in Lacoochee. They're friendly people . . . . If something happens to your family, they're with you . . . . If you get sick, they'll do what they can to help you."

Lacoochee provided services which were unavailable in most other small southern towns of the period. People were proud of their neat little community and remember vividly its heyday. Leon Burnsed described the town.

> We had a big sawmill. We made lumber up to the rate of sixty-five thousand feet a day, and in the thirties the yard was stacked up to fifty million feet . . . . We had a good operation in the mill down there. We had the sawmill, we had the finishing mill, we had the crate mill, we had the power plant, we had the machine shop and the best equipped of any in the county at that time.

Burnsed and his wife still live in the home built by Cummer many years ago. The Burnseds are still as strong and firm as the boards of the house. "It was a nice place here. The trees here were still small. The company had good houses here, and [they] were reasonable. A house like this rented for $3 a week, lights and water. You always had the doctor's services right here on this next block."

Such luxuries as running water and electricity, however, did not come easily. To those used to forty hour work weeks with coffee breaks and hour long lunches, labor of a lumbering operation of the period is unimaginable. Jason McElveen recalled that "back in them days we run the mill six days a week, ten hours a day. In the latter twenties and twenty-nine, why the labor, common labor, was twenty-five cents an hour. In the thirties it got down to ten or fifteen cents an hour." Most of the jobs were sixty hours a week of intense labor. "They worked, and I've seen them work . . . until the sweat would run down and run out of their shoes. They got that $1.10 . . . possibly $1.25 . . . for all day, for ten hours."

Hand signals were a vital means of communication in the din. Whole vocabularies were developed in mills in order to coordinate work among people sharing a piece of equipment, to stop work in an emergency, or to share information such as "the superintendent's in the mill."

Noise added stress. Benta Clements told how "you couldn't hear with your ears. Oh, after you worked there a month or two, you never did pay no mind to it. But when you first started, you'd feel like you couldn't hear nothing. Then you got to where you . . . could carry on a conversation."

Strikes were extremely uncommon among lumbering operations. When they did occur, they were often violent and futile. In the latter thirties, some in Lacoochee believed the working conditions warranted the desperate measure of a strike. Narratives about the strike are dramatic but rather rare. Hazel Brannen vividly remembers her husband's role.

> [The] switches were over against the wall, and so when they set the time for the strike at 10:00 . . . , why, some of the people stopped their little machines . . . . But, I guess my husband didn't think it was closing down quick enough. So, he walked over to the wall, and he started to pull one of the switches . . . that would just shut down everything to make total nothing running . . . . (And my husband was not a big man.) He started over to pull the switches, and Mr. ——— went with him, and he says, "You pull them and I won't let anybody bother you." And he pulled all three of those switches and shut everything down.

Jason McElveen today exhibits much of the spirit that fueled the strike. "Number 517, if I remember right, is the number of the union that was in Lacoochee. We organized there, and struck the sawmill, and shut 'em down twenty-eight days. And they agreed to raise our wages five percent."

The approach of World War II changed many aspects of life in Lacoochee, as it did all over the globe. After the depressed thirties, work quickened, and jobs were plentiful. Hazel Brannen's husband "went to work for them [Cummer] when he was fifteen and worked there until World War II. In World War II he went to the shipyard." Many of the Lacoochee men carpooled to the more lucrative jobs at the shipyards in Tampa.

As labor demand increased, social roles altered. Women had worked in the mills from the beginning of the Cummer operation in Lacoochee, many of them making nine cents an hour. In the early 1940s their roles began to change. "They [the men] went to the shipyards and worked, and the women run the mill . . . . In 1942 they had to put a woman on this . . . what they called a big nailer. It made heads for the orange boxes. I was the first woman that ever run that nailer," said Brannen.

The anxiety caused by the war was relieved somewhat by activities which provided a sense of contribution and companionship. "During World War II they rolled bandages for the service. We did it in the Baptist Church. We'd meet there and roll bandages at night. We had a tower. We went and put in so many hours during the week . . . . It was a volunteer program of self-defense during the war."

Admidst the horrors, World War II created many curious social situations. One of the most curious must have been the presence of Rommel's Afrika Corps in the mills of Lacoochee. Prisoners of war were scattered about to make up a bit of the labor lost to the war. Brannen recalled that

> When I worked there . . . , they seemed to be very nice. We did not talk to them. They had guards in there that guarded them while they worked. [To the] best of my knowledge, they did not run any machines. They more or less did what we called "caught behind them." Somebody else run the machine, and they would catch the finished product as it came out.

The narratives from former residents of the area about the "P.W.s" in Lacoochee are an indication of the benevolent treatment given to prisoners of war in the United States. This careful treatment led inadvertently to small changes in local populations.

> They had what they called a smoking break in the middle of the morning. They would give them a smoking break which angered some of the people because they were not allowed to smoke. You went in to work at 8:00, and you worked 'till 12:00, and you were not allowed to go smoke . . . . That was the beginning of the people that worked at the mill taking smoking breaks, 'cause they decided if the prisoners could do it, they would do it too.

Occasional cultural exchanges did occur between the Lacoocheeites and the German P.W.s. Hazel Brannen retained a token of her husband's affection and a young German's traditional skill.

> Some of them made different things that they sold for a little bit of money . . . just like that box there that I showed you . . . . But he showed my husband this box that he made from just little pieces . . . . My husband said: "I'd like to get one of those for my wife," . . . and my husband bought that box from him.

Exchanges of personal concerns occurred between the two cultures as well.

> I know this interpreter talked to my husband. And he told him, when they were fixing to go back, "Well, I didn't have it so bad. I had plenty to eat, a good place to sleep. We worked here in the mill. We were taken to see movies . . . . But my family is the one I'm worried about because they've been where everything's been torn up. . . . I don't know just what I'll find when I get back home."

Actual bonds of freindship were developed between the residents of Lacoochee and the German prisoners of war. Several of the former P.W.s have visited Lacoochee in the postwar years.

Change seemed to become the dominant aspect of life in Lacoochee after World War II. As citrus processing in Florida modernized and took over the bulk of the citrus crop, the crate mills slowly went the way of the brontosaurus. Miriam Pire recalled that:

> There were so many different kinds of crates that we made. There were tomato crates, and avocado crates, and lime crates, and orange crates and . . . , field crates. Nowdays, I don't think anybody uses them anymore. But [Lacoochee] use to be one of *the* places to buy field crates in the state . . . . The crate mill in Lacoochee was one of the largest in the South. They started processing so much of the fruit rather than shipping it fresh that the crates simply lost out.

She noted that natural disaster also played a part in forcing change.

> Well, one of the biggest changes that our community ever had was when Abe's Drug Store burned. That was the biggest change right there, because it just changed everybody's way of life . . . . But at that time a whole string of stores burned, so it just changed the whole complex of everything up there.

The invasion of the ubiquitous convenience store robbed even Lacoochee of some of its regional flavor, as these stores have all over North America. "Used to be about three grocery stores up there, and the super markets come on. And then these little jiffy stores, why, they put Momma and Poppa out of business," said Leon Burnsed.

The coup de grace came at the closing of the mill in the late 1950s. The end of the lumber meant the end of a traditional life for hundreds of families. "It was a terrible feeling for some of the people . . . . But nobody had complaints because they were the only source in Pasco County for years of employment, outside of farming and groves." Ms. Brannen said:

> I would think that the way it turned out that they just went in and multilated the forest, and possibly there should have been trees planted as they were cut down. But, you know, hindsight is always better than foresight, and so possibly, they didn't think either. But I think had they planted trees as they did away with them, that the industry could have gone on, and on, and on. But they just went in, and cut them down, and left bleak places. I don't guess you would say destroying because the boxes were needed, the lumber was needed for houses and things like that . . . . So, you can't say it was destroyed, but they were just not replanted, and they should have been.

More and more in our "future shock" world, traditional lifestyles, folk architecture, and cohesive communities are colliding with the trend toward urbanization, mass housing, convenience stores, and rapidly shifting populations. The trend pervades the life most people enjoy today and is a part of the contemporary world just as industrialization was a part of the nineteenth century. We cannot simply condemn all aspects of modern life. But perhaps through examining traditional communities, we can understand how we got to where we are; how our past, present, and future are connected; and how we may adapt to modernization, cultural conflict, and the mobility of modern American life. As popular culture invades even the most traditional of communities, perhaps we can reverse the flow a bit and learn from the experiences of others, for as Hazel Brannen put it, "Lacoochee's a little place, but it's part of the world."

## FOOTNOTES

1. This study is based on an oral history conducted in Lacoochee, Florida under the auspices of the Florida Endowment for the Humanities, the Pioneer Florida Museum and the people of Lacoochee. Interviews were conducted by Loretta Van Winkle and Jim Johnson. Special thanks are due to informants Hazel Brannen, Leon Burnsed, Benta Clements, Viola Grant, Jason McElveen, and Miriam Pire for their help.

# *NON NIMIUM CREDENDUM ANTIQUITATI:*[1] BUT DON'T THROW THE BABY OUT WITH THE BATHWATER

*Robert Thomson*

A noticeable trend in recent folklore studies is the marked reluctance of researchers to employ the older data available in archives for anything other than the occasional footnote or in an omnibus collection of a particular genre of folklore. When large anthologies appear, they are presented to the public as a form of annotated archive; but such collections are more rarely published today than in the past because of the very high production costs and, more significantly, the growing critical skepticism concerning their usefulness. At issue appears to be the provenance of archival data and the utility of reproducing it without detailed contextual information. Since a very great deal of what is contained in older archives was accumulated at a time when contextual details were not considered to have the importance they have today, the archival retrievals of a past age are dismissed from serious study and consideration.

If this dismissal were entirely perspicacious, we should have to jump to at least two conclusions. First, established folklore archives, like museum specimens, serve only to remind us of the outer finery of tradition as it once was, that a transcribed folksong, for example, is simply a dead example of a once living form like a seashell or stuffed bird. Second, the establishment of any archive is an exercise in futility and can serve no useful purpose since the constant improvements in recovery techniques will always render past accumulations redundant. It is plain that few folklorists subscribe to the view of archival redundancy since a major part of the collective efforts of folklorists throughout the world has been directed to establishing and enhancing the many folklore collections that have proliferated in the past thirty years or so. Obviously neither of these conclusions makes much sense. In particular, the folksong can be made to live again just as the polished seashell and stuffed bird can serve many functions if one has the wit to employ them usefully. But without their recovery there is nothing.

If on the one hand, folklorists are anxious to found and enlarge archives, then why on the other, are they so reluctant to put them to use? Why, in the many studies of comparative folklore that are published annually, is there so little evidence of their utility? Why do so many journal articles depend entirely upon the availability of printed sources or the author's own fieldwork alone? Is it due to an ignorance of the existence of archives? Surely not in this age of instant computerized data retrieval. Is the problem one of lack of access? This can still be a problem, but persistence and persuasion will usually overcome the most reluctant archivist. Doubts about the archive's integrity? This is all too often an excuse to justify avoiding the application of the same scholastic rigor that is expected of researchers in most areas of the humanities today. There is a legitimate concern when one is employing older archival materials. Collection methods were primitive by today's standards, and subsequent presentation of data in archival files often followed uneven and haphazard procedures. But an intelligent student of folklore today is, or should be, aware of the limitations of archival references and can take the necessary precautions that might otherwise mislead his reader.

Two narratives, "The Devil's Millhopper" and "The Convivial Snake," are discussed here to illustrate the problems and benefits of using older archival recoveries. Both are taken from a large accumulation of verbal folklore gathered since 1935, by faculty, students, and other fieldworkers in Florida and now housed in the Department of English at the University of Florida.[2] The bulk of the materials now in the collection are modern, i.e. post-1975, but the foundations were laid down by Professor Alton Morris in the mid-1930s, particularly in his capacity as Director of the National Youth Administration of Florida — Folklore Project.

The NYAF Folklore Project allowed Dr. Morris to employ about one hundred young men and women throughout the state of Florida. As far as can be determined, none of them were trained fieldworkers in folklore. Their distribution throughout the state suggests a concentration in those counties of the northwest quadrant of the state, although data did come from as far afield as Key West. It is no longer possible to ascertain the instructions they received, but it would appear that certain specific genres of folklore were sought. Thus rhymes, superstitions, songs, tall tales, ghost stories, local legends, and anecdotal lore concerning the early settlers seem to make up the bulk of what has survived of the early archive. Regrettably not all the records *do* survive for a fire in the top floor of Anderson Hall at the University of Florida some years ago destroyed much that had been preserved. As is often the case, it was not so much the fire as the water used to fight the fire that did the damage. The surviving papers were then placed into departmental back-files from which they fortuitously re-emerged in 1977.

Of particular interest to the present writer are the collections of local legends and tall tales. They appear to have been rather thoroughly gathered, and in some cases, e.g. the legends of the Devil's Millhopper and the tall tale of "The Convivial Snake," a number of versions are to be found. Both of these narratives have persisted in oral currency to the present day, although with varying fidelity to their earlier forms.

The Devil's Millhopper is an old and overgrown sinkhole that, apart from a small stream, is devoid of water. It is situated in woodland some three miles northwest of the city of Gainesville and, as a state preserve, has become a well known and much appreciated local beauty spot. A steep wooden stairway allows the visitor to climb down a hundred feet or so to the floor of the sink where, during most of the year, is to be found a clear stream flowing over alluvial sand. The stream is fed by springs halfway up the sides of the hole, and in the sand, sharks teeth and Indian arrowheads are occasionally found.

Like many such geographical landmarks, the mystery of the origin of the Devil's Millhopper has given rise to numerous etiological tales. The most recent of these tales are somewhat prosaic as is to be expected in our less credulous age. The four examples that follow illustrate.

1

> Some time ago, evidently in the nineteenth century, there was some sort of mining operation going on here. Part of the by-product was slag. In order to dispose of this slag the mine operators availed themselves to dump the rubble from the mine into a huge hole that was nearby. From then on it was called the "Millhopper." The word "mill" meaning a place where something is ground, lends its name to the mining operation and the "hopper" is what the product from the mill is loaded into, in this case, being a hole in the ground. Now, as far as the "Devil" is concerned, I heard that the owner of the mine was an evangelist and people added the name Devil to the Millhopper to spite him.

2

> Yea, I remember a story I used to hear when I was a kid about four years old. There used to be this old dirt road runnin' out here by where we are and to hear tell, one day this old black preacher was drivin' his wagon — he was goin' to church or comin' from there, I don't remember. Anyway he was a' singin' as he was drivin'. Well, all of a sudden the ground started shakin' and all kinds of noise started and the ground just caved right in. They never did find the preacher either. That's the way I heard it started.

3

> Well, do you know what a hopper is? Well, it's a place where you put grain; and when you see the Devil's Millhopper that's what it looks like, a big hopper. One

> day these people were driving down the road in their wagon, and they saw this huge hole forming right in the road before them. They were really scared because as the hole got bigger they saw the devil reach up and pulled damned souls down into Hell. Well, they turned their buggy around and didn't stop those horses till they got to town, and that's how it got the name Devil's Millhopper.

4

> There is the story I have heard about when they were first logging this country. They cut huge trees out of here then. There were pine trees one hundred feet long and five feet across. They hauled them out on big wagons with teams of oxen. Well, they had some of these wagons loaded and dark came, so they left them parked. The loggers would sit around the campfire after supper and tell tales. Well, this one logger was known for his big tales that he was good at telling. So this one night he was telling a good one, and someone asked him when he finished if that was true. He said, oh yes, he knew for a fact that that was true. If it wasn't, may the ground fall away from under him. And it did, way down from under him. And that is supposed to be the way the Devil's Millhopper was formed.

Earth swallowing stories are common to many cultures throughout the world and are often associated with explaining the origin of geographical landmarks such as sinkholes, quarries, holes eroded in rocks, mining subsidence or any natural depression in the earth. In many of these legends, a common feature is the intervention of some supernatural agent or agency; and in western civilization, the devil is by far the commonest figure. But the devil does very little that is not provoked by the ill-conduct of humankind. Stith Thompson's *Motif Index of Folk Literature*[3] abounds with motifs associated with the dire punishments meted out for transgressing the rules of conduct a society expects its members to adhere to. Many of these motifs are concerned with earth swallowings of one kind or another, but few of them appear in the four stories given above.

The four tales above were all collected in Gainesville, Florida in the 1970s. None of them gives a fully detailed narrative such as one usually associates with the earth swallowing legend, and but one of them indicates explicitly that a transgression is the cause of the swallowing. Version 1 is clearly a rationalization which details events which did not occur — there never was a mill at the site of the Devil's Millhopper as far as records indicate. Versions 2 and 3 share the notion of some wagon riders being privy to the events that occurred, either as observers or hapless victim — did singing on Sunday constitute a violation of rules? Version 4 is more interesting for it illustrates a well known motif — Q552.2.3.1.2 Earth swallows man as punishment for sacrilege — and whether the sacrilege be blasphemy, heresy, or false swearing, the motif is common in folktales found throughout the United States and is especially to be found in Irish folklore. Paradoxically, the legend of the tall tale teller's demise could be regarded as a tall tale itself, but in fact it is most clearly identified as a familiar migratory legend.

I believe that the older archival recoveries offer us the only route to explaining the overriding concern of legends detailing the origin of the Devil's Millhopper. Furthermore, it is only by considering these texts that we can fully appreciate the consistent moral reinforcement suggested by the legends in spite of the fact that they are very different in the manner in which they tell their story.

5

> A group of people went out to the woods one Sunday to picnic. Well, one guy took a bottle of 'shine with him, and during the afternoon, he got as drunk as a

skunk. Well, the party broke up because of this, and they decided to leave but the drunk wouldn't get on the wagon. So they let him trail along behind. Suddenly there was a great noise from behind them, and when they went to see what it was, they found a great hole in the ground and no sign of the drunk. They say to this day that that drunk was taken by the Devil for drinking on a Sunday.

6

It seems that Gainesville and the land within a radius of about fifty miles once formed a massive plantation. At a spot about twelve miles north of Gainesville was located an old church, which had been turned over to the slaves to have their own religious services.

Every Sunday the slaves would gather from miles around and perform devout services. One Sunday, after the services were over and the Negroes were walking back to their homes, one of the girls seems to have been detained at the church and was somewhat behind the rest of the crowd. Unknown to her, she was being followed by a big burly black that was awaiting his opportune time to attack the girl. Suddenly he sprang after the girl, and as he did so, the crowd of slaves ahed [sic] were attracted by a terrible, bloodcurdling noise. They ran back and they found the girl lying on the ground beside a massive hole in the ground that had appeared with that terrific noise. To this day, lives the tale that the Devil came up from Hell to save the girl from the black brute, and as he came up, he tore a massive hole in the ground. That hole is still there, partly filled with water, and natives will tell you that it has no bottom. The hole bears the name "Devil's Hopper," and is known to many people in this vicinity.

7

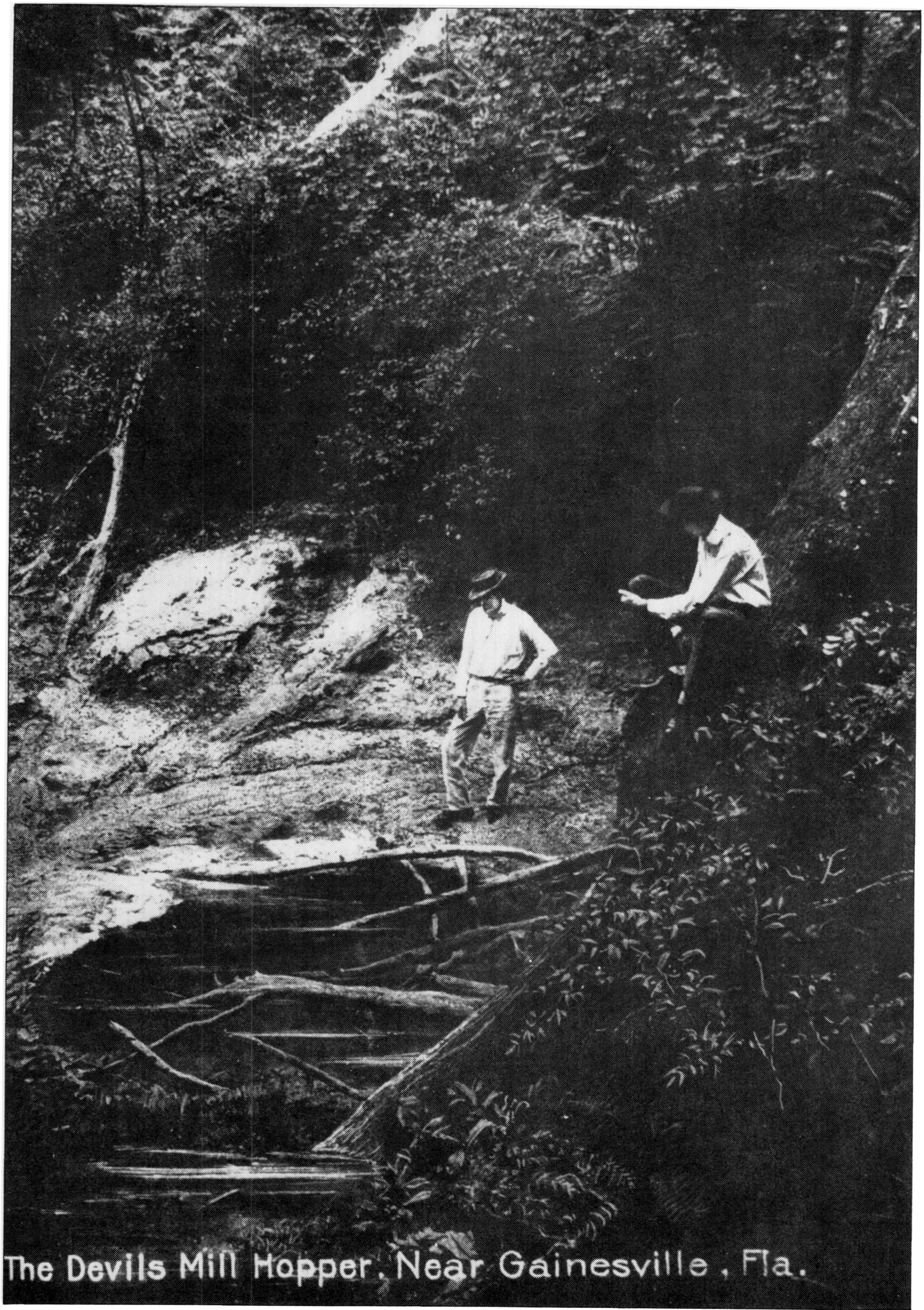
The Seminoles tell how years ago the Indians were driven north from their original hunting grounds. Upon reaching the vicinity of Gainesville, the Indians held their ground and gave battle to the white intruders. They were successful in repelling the whites. In the course of the battle, a white youth fell captive to the Indians. They returned with their victim to their camp where it was decided that he would be offered as a sacrifice to celebrate the advent of the green corn. The daughter of the tribe's chief fell in love with this white warrior and sought to save his life. This very much angered her father and the rest of the tribal chiefs, but the boy was nevertheless spared. One day while sitting in their forest meeting place wrapped in each other's arms, the Great Spirit of the Indians descended on them. Angered at the sight of this beautiful red maiden in the arms of a white man, he proceeded to take vengeance on them. He sent a flaming jagged arrow on the pair below. When the smoke had cleared away, there was a ragged gaping hole where once the lovers had been. Then, according to Indian legend, the God of the white man, seeing this great hole, an emblem of Indian honor, proceeded to sow it with seeds of growing life, a symbol of eternal love.

8

Long before America was discovered by the Spaniard, Columbus, Indians lived in this country.

At this time there lived a beautiful Indian princess. She was in love with and loved by a handsome Indian prince. One day Lucifer [Satan] appeared upon the face of the earth and was strolling around from place to place, when he saw the beautiful Indian maiden by a stream. She looked so beautiful, he immediately fell in love with her. His sole thought was to have her for his bride.

Lucifer put on the guise of a handsome Indian brave. He went down to the stream to woo her. He offered her all the furs, trappings, colorful feathers, orna-


The Devils Mill Hopper, Near Gainesville, Fla.

*The Devil's Mill Hopper from an early postcard*
*Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection,*
*Florida State Archives*

> ments, and beads that any princess could desire. All that he wished for in return was her everlasting love.
>
> She in turn told him of her mutual love with the Indian prince and begged to be released from his affections.
>
> Lucifer became very irate. His suit had been rejected by the princess. He was determined to seek revenge, removing her from the earth.
>
> One night he came and stole the beautiful princess away. The princess screamed. The Devil placed his hand over her mouth, but her lover had already heard her cry.
>
> Her lover started pursuit and was soon about to overtake Lucifer. Lucifer possessed this supernatural power. He stamped his foot on the ground three times. A great cavity was then formed to permit his and the princess's entrance to the lower portions of the world.
>
> This hole remains and is now the Devil's Millhopper. The princess's people came to weep for her and were transformed into stone that continued to weep for the return of the princess. The tears from the stone produced the stream that flowed into the main springs in the middle of the pit. This is to let the princess know that her people are still waiting for her return.

Quite apart from the obviously prolix style of version 7 and perhaps 8, these older recoveries must be treated circumspectly. They were gathered by untrained fieldworkers who were not always careful to render their texts in precisely the same diction that was employed by their informants. There is some reason to suspect that, on occasion, they even regarded their offerings to Professor Morris's archives as writing exercises! In addition, there is no mention of the context in which the collection was made and no information detailing what the storyteller thought of his narrative; its truth, usefulness, where obtained, how learned, when, etc.

Notwithstanding these omissions, we can see that there is a persistent pattern: the punishment for breaking a taboo or transgressing laws of social behavior is both awful and final. Furthermore the deeds leave a perpetual reminder to warn others.

The older legends are particularly well structured even if their diction is at times unfortunate. For example, version 8 is a remarkably intact series of motifs which are common to many different cultures. Thus the devil taking the place of a lover at a trusting place leads ultimately to his rejection (K1317.10) and as a consequence punishment of a woman who prefers her mortal lover (Q255). Abduction by the devil (R11.2 or G303.9.5.1) leads finally to the excessive grief of the tribe, who are transformed to stone (A974). Their tears create or originate a spring (A941.2) which commemorates their loss (A941.4.1). This remarkably taut narrative employs motifs familiar in legends from European, British, West Indian, North American Indian, and Polynesian traditions. It is a true migratory legend, idiosyncratic only in its superficial details and, alas, its "improved" language. Whether the taboo or infraction be Sunday drunkenness, attempted rape, tabooed miscegenation, or excessive grief, these older texts, with all their faults, are essential to building up a picture of the meaning and function of such a cohesively patterned yet apparently disparate group of legends. It would be folly to proceed to examine only those recently gathered and better annotated versions.

In the case of "The Convivial Snake" a different lesson is learned. This tall tale is extremely widespread in the United States.[4] Very many versions have been recovered and there are numerous examples in the older archives gathered by Dr. Morris. One version will suffice to give the bare story:

> One day a man went fishing. While he was on his way to the lake he saw a snake trying to swallow a frog. He decided he wanted the frog for fish bait. He was carrying a bottle of whiskey in his pocket so he took the bottle out of his pocket and poured some of it down the snake's mouth. The snake dropped the frog so the man picked up the frog and went on. He had been fishing for some time when he felt something against his pants leg. He looked down and the snake was rubbing his leg with his head with another frog in his mouth.

Here we are presented with the barest details of a tall tale without any details that would indicate how it would be told traditionally or in what circumstances. The necessary sequence of events is intact — in a sense it is complete in every detail but, like the polished seashell it is inert, lifeless, and gives us nothing of the flavor of oral performance.

The value of modern collections lies in their accuracy and the desire on the part of the collector to impart something of the event of storytelling to the reader. The following version is an excellently rendered text of the above tale, which, despite the fact that the storyteller has evidently lost his way in recounting it, still gives us the kind of data we wish were uniform in archives.

> Well, they wuz havin' a contest one day about stories an' they told a few fishin' stories an I wuz asked by one of 'em, "Who you figger is ahead in thet story?" I tole him, "They're even." He tellin' about goin' fishin' tellin' 'bout what kinds bait you see an all thet kinda stuff an so I told him I said, "Well," I said, "You ready to go fishin'," I said, "you genrally use the kind of bait thet's necessary to ketch the kind of fish you're fishin' for." Then I went on bout one time I wuz fishin' an I said, "I use spring frawgs to ketch trout wid." An so I tole em, "Well," I says, "I genrly use frawgs all the time. I used em all up an I had caught a nice stringer trout," an I said, "an I had one mo" (let's see how'd . . . yeh, I'member) I said, "I had one more frawg an he was about dead." But I says, "You know there have [to have] a live frawg kickin' aroun' mite . . . on your hook to make fish attractin." An so I says, "An I wuz lookin' an I wuz sittin' down beside of a gret big oak a 'leanin' over de creek, an I wuz sittin' down there jus' kinda passin' time away an wif haf a dead frawg." An I says, "An I heard a frawg holler down the creek." He said, "Wamp, wamp, wamp, wamp, wamp," an I says, "Thet might be a snake got thet frawg." An so I says, "Spec I better go down there an see." An I walked off down the creek an I seen the frawg tryin' to get away, jumpin', thet old boy jump — gret big ole frawg an thet snake tryin' to swallow him. An so I reached down an caught the mocassin, an I caught the mocassin an he spit de frawg up, spits the frawg out of de mouth an then I caught the frawg. Thet frawg went hoppin' off an I caught him. An I says, "Well I can get me nother trout now." An so I took thet live frawg, an I says, "Well, I got this here frawg here an I'm gonna ketch a trout wid him." And so I hooked him on the line an I throwed him out an jus' about the time I throwed him out a gret big — 'bout a six to eight poun' trout grabbed him. An I says, "Yeh, an I tighten on him an I landed him. I landed him wid thet bait." An then I says, "An I fished right on wid thet snake on the line, I mean thet frawg on the line," an I says, "an after awhile," I says, "I wuz leanin back against a gret big oak thet wuz there, a terrible big oak." An I says, "I felt sompin punch me on the elbow, right there." An I says, "I wonder whut thet is, buttin' me like thet?" I looked down there . . . an in the meantime I had (thet's when I dranks whiskey long in them times an I had a pint a whiskey in my pocket) an I took out the pint a

> whiskey outa my pocket an I gagged the ole snake and squeezed him' an I guess I musta gagged him or sumpin; anyhow he throwed the frawg up.
> (INTERVIEWER) Is this another snake that came up with another frog in its mouth?
> No thet same snake.
> (INTERVIEWER) With another frog?
> Yeh, come up with another frawg. "An he come up dere he act like wanted to schwap me another frawg for another drink a thet liquor. An the other time I poured some moonshine whiskey down him." An I says, "An after I poured thet whiskey down him . . . (been a kinda long time since I told this story but . . .) yeh, I finally caught another trout on the line with thet same bait an I had me nother trout on the line there an he kept turnin' around out there an a bigger trout than him took to him an was gonna ketch him." An so they say, "Is thet all about the frawg?" I says, "Yeh, I think thet all about thet frawg." They says, "Well," they says, then some a the rest of em told tales about thet frawg, about thet fishin' business, an so when they got thoo all of em went aroun' six or eight of 'em, ten, told fish stories 'bout whut they'd done' bout stories they had make an all thet kinda stuff. An so they told me they says, "Mr. Filaney," he says, "I believe thet thet man wid thet snake — I believe thet he's the winner. Cause he told most crazier than any the rest has."
>
> . . . When they started to givin' the prizes away, they said to give [me one] (I disremember whether I got the first prize or not). Anyhow they told me, "Come up here and get yore prize." All these here other fellow all decided thet I had the best snake story of the whole bunch. I said, "Well, thet's the first time I ever told a lie an got paid for it." I said, "I thank all a y'all."

Despite Mr. Filaney "disremembering" the orderly structure of his story, all of its elements are there. And in addition we have the context — a tale told within the framework of a story-telling contest. The collector's rendition of dialect is not always appropriate but it is clear. "The Convivial Snake" is, in this latter text, a fond reminiscence of an old man who once won a story-telling contest but who evidently no longer performs his tales in such circumstances. What he does remember is that a tale, well told, is to be savored and teased out for the audience.

Both the legend and the tall-tale given here are representative of current traditional usage. In both, there is some indication that the art of story-telling may be moribund, i.e. the tale or legend is more likely to be a reminiscence today than a component in an active, vital art. Whether or not this is true, it is plain that our archives are becoming increasingly valuable as resources. They will be more than mere museum specimens if their data are employed as corrective or supplemental to the fieldwork being pursued assiduously today.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Latin proverb: Do not trust antiquity too much.
2. Grateful thanks are due to both the collectors and story-tellers who made this short paper possible: L. Gaitanis, L. David, J. Frank, J. Richards, L. Bryant, D. Gancarz, M. Rosier, V. Parker, F. Heartsfield, F. Filaney, and particularly J. Williams III.
3. Stith Thompson, *Motif Index of Folk-Literature — A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Medieval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books and Local Legends.* Revised and Enlarged Edition, 6 vols. (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1966).
4. Though the story does not appear in the type and motif indexes, it is a familiar story in print. A fine collection of tall tales by Lowell Thomas, *Tall Stories: The Rise and Triumph of the Great American Whopper* (Funk & Wagnalls Company, New York and London, 1931), gives an archtypical text with references to more than twenty-five versions the editor had received from correspondents, including eight from Florida.

## JOIN THE CIRCLE: THE FOLKLORE OF FLORIDA CHILDREN

*Allan F. Burns*

Children's folklore consists of the rhymes, handclap songs, jokes, taunts, cheers, games, riddles, magical formula, camp songs, parodies, stories, "put downs," circle games, secret languages, jump rope songs, counting out routines, ritual insults, exaggerated tales, and other forms of verbal art performed by young people. A characteristic which separates this lore from other kinds of folklore is that the folklore of children is learned from their peers. It is not something that is necessarily handed down from the adult world but is instead taught by older children to their younger brothers and sisters. In contrast to children's lore, the more refined games and songs taught to young people by adults can be considered nursery lore. We often overlook the variety and richness of children's lore because it is an expressive form that adults quickly forget.

Children's lore is a part of the knowledge shared by people when they are growing up. The forms have meaning in the everyday world of children's interaction with peers. As young people grow older the patterns of interaction change, once meaningful forms of expression lose relevance, and the lore is often not remembered when children pass through adolescence. In this sense the lore of Florida's young people is an esoteric art whose practitioners forget the ghost stories, dirty rhymes, and games when their dependency on parents and teachers wanes.

Children's folklore is an exuberant expression of Florida lifeways. It is a vehicle through which young Floridians connect with each other, creating the social cement which links people to people, people to places, and people to attitudes and values. The lore is the avenue along which new youngsters are brought into the play group, whether at school or on the street. It is the way they make new friends and become enculturated to enjoy who they are and where they are. In this article I will explore some of the forms, meanings and performances of this kind of lore in Florida. In addition, I will suggest ways of tapping this rich trove of Florida folklife.

### Functions of Children's Folklore in Florida

Will you come dance with me Mary Ann?
Will you come stomp with me Mary Ann?
Will you come clap your hands with me Mary Ann?
Mary Ann, Mary Ann, Mary Ann.

Will you come pop your fingers with me Mary Ann?
Will you come walk with me Mary Ann?
Will you come sit with me Mary Ann?
Mary Ann, Mary Ann, Mary Ann.

"Mary Ann" is a singing and handclap game collected from a five year old girl in Alachua County. Rashanda, who gave the version, said that she heard it in her pre-school. Notice that the words of the song call for action, or better said, for interaction between children. They call for cooperative play, the basis for becoming acquainted with another person. An important function of this and other games like it, is that newcomers to the play group are able to become part of an enjoyable activity very quickly. The song is easy to learn, and as a result, new children who learn the song can feel that they are a part of their unfamiliar surroundings in just a few minutes. No one asks them where they came from or why they are here, they are just asked to join in some fun.

The power of children's lore to break down social barriers was illustrated to me a few years ago when my family and I met a family who had just moved to Florida. We became friends with the newcomers, but I found that my son, Christopher, was afraid of Erica, the daughter of our friends. Erica is a good, happy child who was about five years older than Christopher. Erica had suffered brain damage as a baby and could not talk. Her size along with her inability to talk made Christopher uneasy. As a typical five year old, he looked at Erica with uncertainty and shied away from her when she and her family came to visit.

One day Christopher noticed Erica laughing and clapping her hands in delight. His eyes lit up at this display of happiness. He then left my side, walked up to Erica, and began to play "Patty Cake" with her, clapping his hands against hers. Erica laughed with delight at the game and Christopher, now unafraid of his new friend said, "See, now she can play with me." Since that time Christopher has not been uneasy around Erica and counts her as one of his friends.

Like the song "Mary Ann," this game of "Patty Cake" created a bridge between these two children, one a newcomer and the other a child afraid of the newcomer. Children's lore, if we look at the root meaning of the word, is really "children's learning." Learning through the words and actions of game songs is an important side of Florida's heritage. As in this case, children's lore can provide a safe and understandable context for learning about new people.

While a song like "Patty Cake" is an old folk game found throughout European history, children's lore is important because it is adaptable to contemporary society. Handclap games like "Patty Cake" are to be found outside the borders of Florida, to be sure, but our state seems to be an area where handclapping is a major genre of lore. While northern children learn to jump rope with great agility and skill, children in Florida take great pride in their handclap games. When children are first introduced to handclap games at age four or five, they often refer to them as "Patty Cakes." Later, when the handclap routines become more complex and the songs more meaningful, the form is simply referred to as "handclaps."

The following words to a handclap game may be reminiscent of the 1920s when these words were a part of a popular song of the era:

Say, say, my playmate,
Come out and play with me,
And bring your dollies three,
Beneath my apple tree.
Climb up my rainbow,
Slide down my cellar door,
And we'll be jolly friends
Forever more; more —
Shut the door-count to four.

In this handclap game children pair off, clapping hands in rhythmic syncopation to the song. When I recorded the song for the first time at an elementary school a few years ago, some of the six year olds who were recording handclaps giggled about it, and spoke of "the other verse." After overcoming their reluctance, I convinced them to perform the next verse:

Say, say, my enemy,
Come out and fight with me,
And bring your sticks and stones,
We'll break each other's bones.

Climb up my razor blade,
Slide down my dungeon door,
And we'll be jolly enemies
For ever more, more —
Shut the door.

This verse about enemies is an indication that Florida children's lore is often at odds with the norms and values of the adult world. One adult said to me that this second verse must have been taught by an "evil child," as good children would not say such things. But of course it wasn't. Even otherwise "good" children need time to vent their feelings of anger or frustration. This second verse, sung as sweetly as the first, is a way children have of externalizing these feelings. Not all of the age mates in a child's world are friends; some are bullies, some are just not nice. In this way children's lore provides a context for exploring some of the areas of social or emotional life that are not openly discussed at other times. By putting the responsibility for these negative ideas onto a traditional verse such as this, individual children are spared personal responsibility for anti-social feelings, yet still are able to explore these same feelings. Florida children's lore is one way that children have of learning about themselves and working through some of the difficulties of childhood. For this reason the Knapps refer to children's lore in general as a "secret education" of children.[1] Taboo subjects not talked about with parents or teachers can find expression through the routines of games and other verbal art.

Recently I had occasion to hear the same handclap game played during a summer recreation program by a group of seven and eight year olds. A new verse had been added after the first verse, and the last verse about enemies had become an optional verse. The new verse reflected a growing awareness of boy-girl relationships:

When I was younger
I played with dollies,
But now I'm older
I play with b-o-y-s.
Boys-boys-boys-boys-boys-boys.

Splish splash, apple sauce,
One, two, I love you,
Three, four, shut the door.

I asked several twelve year olds from the same neighborhood if they knew this new verse and ending. They all said that they did not. This new addition to this popular handclap could, I suppose, reflect a growing consciousness of sexuality among seven and eight year olds. On the other hand, the fact that more boys were joining in the handclap games during lulls in the recreation program activities suggests another explanation for the verse. With more boys participating, boy-girl differences become verbalized. When girls alone did the game the primary referents were gender neutral "friends" and "enemies." Now the participation of boys is publicly legitimized by the new verse which deals directly with them.

Another popular song performed as a handclap game is a variation of a popular song of the 1950s, "Rockin' Robin." While "Say say my playmate" is primarily a girls handclap, boys tend to be the major participants in "Rockin' Robin." This song has explicit sexual references, and I was at first surprised to hear it performed by a group of six and seven year olds.

She's a rockin' and a rockin' all day long,
Rockin' and a rockin' going singing this song,
All the little birds on jay bird street
Love to hear the robin go tweet tweet tweet.

(Chorus)

Rockin' robin
Tweet-a-leet-a-leet
Rockin' robin
Tweet-a-leet-a-leet
Rockin' robin

Mama's in the kitchen, cookin' that rice,
Daddy's at the bar, shootin' that dice.
Brother's in jail, waitin' that bail,
Sister's on the corner selling pussy for sale.

(Chorus)

Mama on the bottom,
Daddy on top
Baby in the middle saying
Sock it on top.

(Chorus)

Few of the children knew what all of the words meant, but they did know that they were "bad." Like much of children's lore, this song is not meant to be sung in front of adults as they would surely frown on the performance. But it is still an enjoyable song to sing, one which younger children can join in on the chorus and older children can sing tbe more "dirty" verses. A song like this depends upon the confusion and laughter of a group of children for its success. When asked when it is sung, the group I recorded it from said "in the lunch line." While waiting in line for lunch, the more obscene verses would not be comprehensible to nearby teachers or lunchroom aides because of all of the laughter and lack of agreement on the words of the verses. The chorus would sound like an innocuous song done by the whole group.

The fact that these handclap rhymes are done at school indicates another important feature of Florida children's lore. It is not dying out. Although children purportedly spend more time in front of the television than outside playing, and physical education has replaced "recess" in many schools, their lore survives and even flourishes in the lines, after school by the bicycle rack, and on the bus.

School bussing to achieve racial balance in the schools has provided the time and location for children's lore to flourish. Integration itself has brought the circle games and lore of black youngsters into the world of white school children and in this way enriched Florida's heritage.

Circle games are performed by groups of children who take turns picking someone to be in the center of a circle. While the group generally dances, sings, and claps hands while moving in a clockwise direction, the center girl turns counter-clockwise. At the end of a verse during which the central dancer improvises a variation on the dance to the game, she points to the girls in the circle. When the verse stops, she stops, and in that way chooses the next girl to be in the center. Then the dance-game starts anew.

The following words to a popular circle game in Florida has a geographic reference to it — Kentucky — as well as a hint of Florida's Hispanic heritage through the use of the word "senorita."

I was going to Kentucky,
That yucky, lucky land.
I met a senorita
With flowers in her hand.

I said shake it senorita
Shake it if you can,
Shake it to the bottom
And shake it once again.

One, two, three, four,
Five, six, seven, eight.

The increasing organization of children's days into formal school and sports activities has affected children's folklore. For one thing, folklore performances have become compressed into the little time available during the school day outside of adult supervision. Children's folklore has taken on an aesthetic based on speed of delivery. Being able to recite or exchange an insult, or "put down," at breakneck speed while walking between a classroom and the auditorium at school has become a highly-regarded skill. Handclap routines have taken on this aesthetic such that they are often done repeatedly, each verse faster than the one before and the complicated clapping done with precision. For example, I once recorded the following items while walking with a group of fifth graders between their classroom and the library, a trip which took less than three minutes:

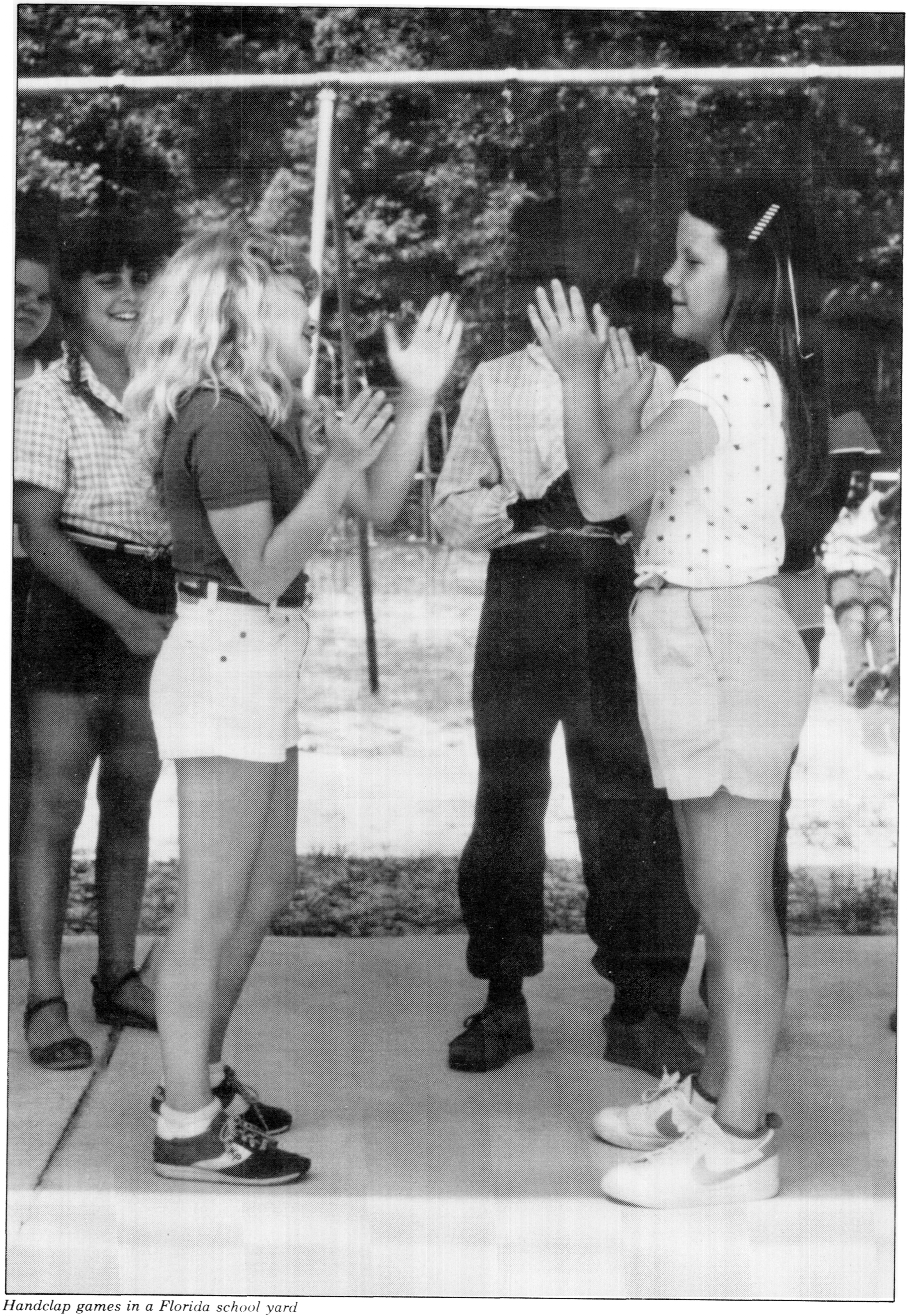
Girl A.: "What number comes after eight?"
Girl B.: "Nine."
Girl A.: "Oh, I didn't know you could speak German!
  You just said 'no' in German."
Girl C. to Girl D.: "You call me that again, girl and I'm goint to slap you
  upside the head."
Girl E.: "She didn't mean it."

Two other girls played the handclap game "Spades" while they walked down the stairs.

A boy snapped his jacket at friends from another class who retorted: "I'm gonna get you for that."

### Florida Communities and Florida Children's Folklore

Florida children's folklore reflects and enriches the communities that children live in. As the understanding of children's culture becomes more sophisticated, the importance of the community as a context for folklore becomes more apparent. It would be tempting to say that a community perspective on folklore is a new and breathtaking idea; but it is something Zora Neale Hurston recognized long ago. Her work, especially as seen in *Mules and Men*,[2] is exemplary in the treatment of community as the wellspring of meaning to folklore. Nevertheless, the community context of children's folklore is an area which needs careful study. The importance of contextual study becomes apparent



*Handclap games in a Florida school yard*
*Courtesy Florida Folklife Archive*

especially as some recent works on folklore, such as the Knapps' *One Potato, Two Potato,*[3] suggest that children's folklore is as uniform as McDonald hamburgers across the country. Florida is a state where a great number of different ethnic and special interest communities have sprung up, and one expects that children's folklore today will reflect this corresponding diversity.

Down in south Florida in Haitian and Cuban-American neighborhoods, children are recounting a new kind of story to one another, the story of the journey between the home they knew so well and their present home in Florida. The journey for the Cubans and the Haitians who migrated during the early 1980s was a wrenching, dangerous, and often traumatic experience. Narratives of the journey are not light fantasies, but are attempts to use storytelling as a way to make sense of the changes children have experienced. The remembrances of recent immigrant children to Florida are filled with references to grandparents who were left behind or to small houses with furniture in remembered locations. "In Cuba my grandmother often said, 'Vaya con Dios' ('Go with God')," a Cuban American girl said. "I never knew what it meant until I came here from the port of Mariel."

A second kind of community out of which children's folklore emerges in Florida is the multicultural community such as those found in Tampa, Fort Myers, and Miami as well as in Gainesville and Tallahassee. In these communities where ethnic diversity is well established, children's folklore is often bilingual. For example, in one apartment complex where a large percentage of the residents are foreign students, a group of children were telling stories. One eight year old told a story in Portuguese and then translated it into English for the children who could not speak Portuguese:

> Well what happened was that every day there was an alligator in the lake, and this man was always drunk, always drunk. And then everytime he would pass by the lake, the alligator would say, "drunk, drunk." And he would say "I'll turn you inside out." And then one day he went to a party, and he drank a lot of whiskey. And then he was all drunk. And then he passed by the lake. And the alligator said, "bebado, beba . . ." I mean, "drunk, drunk" in English. And then he got the alligator and turned him inside out. And then the next day the man was passing by, and the alligator said, "kunkadju, kunkadjuh." You know, backwards "drunk."

The joke is difficult for an English speaker to appreciate because English does not have a category of "talking backwards" such as is found in Brazilian Portuguese. The child expanded the range of joke interpretation among the American-born children present by explaining why the punch line was funny.

In these ways, children's folklore in Florida's multicultural communities brings about cultural enrichment. It provides newcomers with a basic vocabulary for surviving in a place where English is the dominant language. The rhymes, taunts, and retorts are often the first routines of language behavior that children master on playgrounds, before they have a full command of English. And when bilingualism becomes a process in children's activities such as the performance of the above alligator joke, bilingual children find that they have something of value to contribute to their new communities.

A third kind of community found in Florida is that of the hamlets and towns where blacks have traditionally lived, such as Eatonville as described by Zora Neale Hurston. According to Shirley Heath who studied language acquisition in the South, these hamlets have a characteristic way of socializing youngsters into the world of storytelling.

> The children between the ages of two and four spontaneously told stories about things in their lives, things they saw and heard. They were almost never read to from books, except by an older sibling who tried to "play school." They heard fanciful stories told by adults and older siblings; these stories were based on exaggeration of real-life events, ironic juxtaposition of happenings, individuals with reputations for "cutting the fool," and highly exaggerated accounts of what might befall a "bad" child . . . . Cooperative stories sometimes went on for days, picking up where they had left off when interrupted by a household activity or departure for work.[3]

Here is one of Heath's recorded stories told by a pre-school child:

> Mother: "Whadja do with that shoe? You wan me ta tie you up, put you on da railroad track?"
>
> The child responded:
> Railroad track
> Train all big 'n black
> On dat track, on dat track, on dat track.
> Ain't no way I can't get back.
> Back from that track,
> Back from dat train,
> Big 'n black, I be back.[4]

**Discussion**

These few examples of the variety of children's lore found in a few representative communities of Florida point to the need for locally-based collection projects across the state. What are the children saying and doing in the new "leisure communities" springing up in Florida around the lakes, tourist meccas, and famous beaches? How are the carefully planned communities of upper class professionals shaping the verbal art of children? What children's folklore can be found in retirement communities? How does it differ in small, cracker communities?

To appreciate this folklore one must begin with some basic assumptions. First of all, children must be seen as having a culture of their own, a culture which contains a storehouse of verbal art. Stories and rhymes, games and taunts are all a part of it. The lore is important to their lives as it connects them with their age mates and with the adults in their community. Second, children's lore is not always nice. The exploration of social and moral taboos is common in it and may offend adult ears. Third, the lore is realized through performance. Words may not be spoken perfectly, or the meanings may be lost, but the actions and participation of youngsters contribute to the learning process.

Educators, health care providers, and others concerned with the lives of children in Florida, may use these assumptions to plan for the utilization of children's folklore. The social isolation of new children to schools, hospitals, or other institutions can be overcome through allowing and encouraging children to teach each other their own folklore. Newcomers can be encouraged to add their special verses or variations to the games and rhymes already present in a group. Children's folklore can have a therapeutic benefit for ill youngsters as it can give a way back into a normal life after an operation or give visitors to sick children something to say and talk about. Students who speak limited English can be taught the vocabulary of the playground through children's games and rhymes. Since school success is related to verbal ability, the quick learning of the routines of handclaps, taunts, and games can have a positive effect on bilingual children's adaption to the academic side of school as well.

In 1981 the Florida State Museum completed a children's folklore project under the direction of Betty Camp. The project had as a goal the creation of a public radio program by a group of children. A local Girl Scout troop came to the museum for several months and learned from audio-visual experts and folklorists how to record children's lore with a tape recorder, how to write a script, and how to mix a program with recorded examples and narration. The completed program, "From Kid to Kid and Generation to Generation," was aired over many public radio stations when it was completed. A recording project such as this one is an activity that other groups such as clubs, churches, and schools could easily repeat in their own communities. Information on the project is available from the Florida State Museum in Gainesville.

The folklore of Florida's children is a rich treasure of the state. It has the power to give a sense of attachment to the people of Florida and to their communities. It has the power to successfully incorporate newcomers to the state. By engaging in folklore, children come to have bonds of friendship and concern for each other and develop a sense of place, that place being Florida.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Mary and Herbert Knapp, *One Potato, Two Potato; the Folklore of American Children* (New York: W. W. Norton and Comapny, 1976).

2. Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1935, rptd. 1978).

3. Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Folkstories of Children* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), pp. 19-20.

4. Shirley Brice Heath, "Questioning at Home and at School: A Comparative Study" in George and Louise Spindler, eds., *Doing the Ethnography of Schooling* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1982), p. 118.

# FOLKSY FLORIDA: WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE?

*Stetson Kennedy*

Few if any American states have been more blessed than Florida in the richness and diversity of their cultural heritage. The question is: what are we doing with this priceless, irreplaceable treasure? Are we cherishing and nurturing the folkways of our peoples, to be handed down alive and kicking to succeeding generations of Floridians — or are we, through neglect and perhaps even scorn, allowing them to wither on the vine, victims of a Mainstream mania that is devouring ethnic cultures worldwide?

We may well take alarm at all the talk of "preserving" Florida's folk cultures "before it is too late." Folklife is not something to be displayed like pheasant under glass, or a frog in formaldehyde. Given such treatment, it ceases to be what it once was. And yet let the recording go on, by all means. We shall be needing it as a seedbank, for our resolve must be to give Florida folklife not a decent burial but a new birth.

Less than a half century ago, when the Lomaxes, Alton Morris, Zora Neale Hurston, Frances Densmore, and I, along with a few others, set about the business of recording it, Florida folkstuff was here, there, and everywhere. While our budgets did not allow even a pittance for informants, we were not above supplying a beer or two to loosen tongues and refresh memories.

But where now are the folkways of yesteryear? It will take a lot more than a six-pack to bring many of them back. To be sure, the English-Scotch-Irish warp of the Florida tapestry is still represented by the likes of "London Bridge Is Falling Down," the Dunedin Bagpipe Band, and a bit of extra tippling on St. Patrick's Day. The woof provided by black Floridians has also demonstrated its durability, but it too is showing signs of fading as the advantages of merging with the Mainstream drive blacks themselves to abjure anything which smacks of the folksy.

If anything, the colorful threads supplied by the many foreign language groups who have helped build Florida have fared even worse. A glance through the Tampa telephone directory, for example, will tell us that the descendants of the Cubans, Spaniards, and Italians who created Tampa Latina are still very much there. But the shops in Ybor City no longer display signs saying "English Spoken Here," because little else but English is spoken anywhere. The Circulo Cubana, Centro Espanol, Centro Asturiano, L'Unione Italiano, and Club Marti-Maceo are either shut down altogether, or mere ghosts of their former domino-clacking selves. Today's tourist in search of Tampa's Latin Quarter would be hard put to find any sign of it, were it not for a couple of restaurants and a museum.

Much the same obituary has to be pronounced over the Cuban colony which once made Key West the cigar-manufacturing capital of the world and richest town per capita in the United States. The Sociedad Cuba has been sold by a handful of men who paid taxes on it, and Instituto de San Carlos, where youngsters once studied in the language of Cervantes, fell victim to the cold war with Castro. Mario Sanchez, the internationally-acclaimed carver of folk scenes, is now retired, and Abelardo Boza, who has given his life to the preservation of Cuban dance forms, is obliged to recruit Anglo lasses for his troupes — *las muchachas Cubanas* are not interested.

Though the Conchs of the Keys have always spoken English in their fashion, their rich folk culture, transplanted from the Bahamas, is suffering a similar fate at the hands of tourism and the media. Farther up, on the Gulf coast, Tarpon Springs is no longer the bustling center of Greek culture it once was. And as for the Minorcans of the St. Augustine area (Florida's most venerable settlers, not counting Indians), hardly a word of the language remains. About the only survivals are recipes for seafood chowder and gopher (terrapin) stew.

While these thumbnail sketches of the state of the folk arts in Florida are admittedly gloomy, despite all the wear and tear resulting from harsh usage, our tapestry is by no means threadbare. A great many skilled weavers are at work, determined to make it richer than ever. But if it is a way of life we are after, not just embroidery, we must all lend a hand at the loom.

Although the forces making for One World are considerable, the conflict between unity and diversity is more apparent than real. That is to say, uniculture is not inevitable. In Florida, many cultures are intent upon maintaining their identity, as other contributors to this publication attest. There is, however, a new question looming on the horizon: what future for folklife in an era of high tech?

Often in the past, human society has undergone profound transformations brought on by environmental changes, conquests, and adoption of new modes of existence. Acculturation, and even the absorption of one culture by another, have been commonplace. But through it all, culture has proven to be a survivor; the continuum has never been broken. Wherever people abide, there some sort of culture lives also. Since folkways have come such a long way, enriching our lives through the gathering/hunting phase, while we till the soil and tend the flock, and have not forsaken us during our stint at the machine, there is really no reason to fear that high tech man will want to make do without them.

Whether or not a given culture survives under changed and even hostile circumstances depends very much upon the will of the people whose culture it is. Perhaps the best proof of the adage that "where there's a will there's a way" is to be found in the survival of Jewish culture through two millenia of dispersion and persecution. Chinese culture, again and again subjected to protracted foreign rule, has always emerged intact. Centuries of French presence in North Africa failed to convert a single Moslem to Christianity. I have seen that same will for cultural self-determination at work among the Catalans in the south of Spain, the Basques in the mountains, and the Bretons on the northern coast of France. I saw it, too, among the writers of Soviet Armenia, who wanted to write in their regional dialects.

Let us hope that here in Florida, neither the Seminoles nor anyone else will have to take to the warpath, like the Basques and Boston Teapartyers, to assert their cultural integrity. That the will continues strong is being made abundantly evident by the inheritors of the British, Black, Latin, Greek, Lebanese, Syrian, Czech, Indian and other cultures to be found in Florida. And the Florida Folk Festival, held each year since 1952 at White Springs, has been doing a splendid job of bringing them all together.

Some may say that the cultivation of folk culture should take place exclusively within the family circle. The hearth has indeed been a focal point for the handing down of tradition; but larger aggregations, such as the community, church, tribe, and nation, have always kept culture high on their agendas. Indeed, the "Golden Ages" may be attributed to the largesse of such patrons. Even today, no one seems to complain when tax dollars are spent to subsidize symphony orchestras and other forms of classical culture, and rightly so. But are not our very own folk art forms entitled to equal support? Such class discrimination is alien to the American ideal and contrary to the American Constitution.

There are many things which we Floridians as a whole need to do to ensure that the seeds being sown do not fall upon rocky ground. Our state legislature showed good intentions by adopting a legal definition for folklife (F.S. 265.135) as "the traditional expressive culture shared within the various groups in Florida" which is "maintained or perpetuated without formal instruction or institutional direction,"[1] and establishing the Florida Folklife Programs as a base of action to enlist schools and other institutions in the conservation of our folkways.

The Florida Folklife Programs has gotten off to a fast start by seeking out folk artists, collecting their creations, and making much of it available in the form of exhibits, printed matter, slides, tapes, phonograph albums, and video programs. It is bringing back from the Library of Congress much of the Florida field materials recorded in past decades. It has available a Florida Folklife Archives Users' Guide," and *Folklife in the Classroom: A Guide for Florida Teachers.*[2] Pilot programs for orienting teachers have been conducted in seven north Florida counties and Hillsborough County, and more are being developed.

To those who may persist in saying that bureaucracy and folk arts, like choreography and folk dancing, won't mix, I say that since folk art is of, by, and for the people, nothing could be more fitting, in a democracy such as ours, than for our public servants to provide all possible material and moral support for our folk culture. And surely it can be done without imposing any bureaucratic straitjackets.

These are "root-hog-or-die" days, for folklife as for much else. While Florida has been launching its folklife program, the federal administration has been drastically cutting funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. As a result of this, and the failure of the Florida Legislature to come up with some alternative funding source, the sum available for folk art grants in our state has dwindled from $53,041 in 1982 to a mere $16,500 in 1983.[3] This is grits without gravy, and puts into question our entire value system. Since we don't have to squander our life blood on overkill defense systems against Georgia (or Alabama), just imagine what we could do for our folk arts by foregoing just one more access to some expressway!

This is not to suggest that the propagation of folklife is exclusively or even primarily a responsibility of government. Folklife does not just grow like Topsy — it has to be nurtured by the whole gamut of human institutions.

We are all too familiar with the negative impact which the invention of printing had upon oral tradition, and the manner in which, more recently, radio, television, and video have impaired the ability of the family to carry out many of its traditional functions. But in every society there is an interfacing of institutions, and whenever one changes, creating a "service gap," others must adapt to fill it.

While the family will always play a major role, it is the school that is best suited to serve as a new seedbed for folk culture. This does not mean that we must throw out Mother Goose and all those other Old World characters, but it does mean we must bring in our own stuff, like "Papa's Gonna Buy You a Mockingbird," "Daddy Mention," and the "Tales of Quevedo." To make Florida folklife an integral part of the curriculum, researchers, writers, teachers, school officials, PTAs, and textbook publishers must all be mobilized.

The church is another institution which has what it takes to foster folk arts. That the church is becoming increasingly aware of this is exemplified by its adoption of "rock" and folk musical idioms.

Community groups can play an important role, too. Not so very long ago, when a tourist asked a Floridian what folks down here do for a living, the answer he got was, "In the summer we live on catfish, and in the winter on Yankees." To increase the winter catch, many communities concocted festivals of every conceivable sort. As time went on, the homefolks got hooked too, so that today there is no month in the year in which you cannot take your pick of a dozen or more festivals. For the most part, however, these affairs have been relatively lacking in traditional folk elements. With but little effort and expense, this lack could be remedied. Usually, just a few words of encouragement are all that is needed to get every ethnic group in the area to join in and "do their thing." The Dade City Pioneer Days Festival, Tallahassee Junior Museum, Pine Castle Center of the Arts, Pensacola Arts Council, and others are already moving in this direction.

The annual ethnic festivals which are cropping up in many parts of Florida are proving an effective means of stimulating folk cultures and introducing them to the community at large. It is oft-said that the way to a man's heart is via his stomach, and that goes for women and children, too. In addition to getting a taste of the traditional dishes and wines of the sponsoring group, the public gets an in-depth exposure to their crafts, costumes, music, song and dance. John Q. Public may even join in the dancing, and take home a recipe book and all the "makings," determined to reproduce some of that "good stuff" in his own kitchen. The Pizza Hut, Taco Bell, Camel Rider, and Chopstick Charlie's are nice to have around, but they can't fill this bill. Of course festivals are a sometime thing, while we are "hollerin-hongry" for folk stuff to go with our daily bread. The media could supply a lot of these essential nutrients. We need to let editors and programmers know that our folk culture rates high with us — that it is not just Trendy, but the In Thing, and we intend for it to stay that way.

In the final analysis, it is what goes on in the street that counts. If the public mind is unreceptive, not even a united front of institutions can save our folklife. Tolerance of one another will not do. A multi-cultural society requires mutual esteem, applause, and embraces. Every week must be Brotherhood Week.

It is far easier to romanticize about cultures which have come and gone than it is to be true to the American tradition of welcoming new arrivals with open arms. Right now, the Vietnamese and Haitians who have come to us are litmus papers, putting Florida to the test. So, too, is Miami, where jingoists are trying to nip an emergent bilingual culture in the bud.

Whether Florida folklife is to have a future as well as a past depends upon what we do in the present. Nothing will work unless we, in our daily lives as well as in our institutions, let it be known that all cultures are equally welcome and free to grow beneath the Florida sun.

## FOOTNOTES

1. The full definition in the Florida Statutes of Florida folklife is: the traditional expressive culture shared within the various groups in Florida: familial, ethnic, occupational, religious, and regional. Expressive culture includes a wide range of creative and symbolic forms such as custom, belief, technical skill, language, literature, art, architecture, music, play, dance, drama, ritual, pageantry, and handicraft, which forms are generally learned orally, by imitation, or in performance and are maintained or perpetuated without formal instruction or institutional direction. (Florida Statutes 265.135).

2. Florida Folklife Program, "Florida Folklife Archive Users' Guide" (Tallahassee: Florida Department of State, 1983); and *Folklife in the Classroom: A Guide for Florida Teachers* (Florida Department of State, 1982).

3. These figures are abstracted from the *Florida Arts Newsletter* 1:4 (July-August 1982). They combine awards for folk arts in the categories of General Program Support, Artists-in-Education, and Fellowships.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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Dr. PAT WATERMAN teaches in the Anthropology Department at the University of South Florida. She studied folklore with Alan Dundes at the University of California, Berkeley, where she compiled a tale type index on aboriginal folktales of Australia. An applied anthropologist as well as a scholar, she has served on the Board of Directors of the Foxfire organization in Georgia and the Historic Tampa-Hillsboro County Preservation Board.

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Dr. ROBERT THOMSON, a graduate of Cambridge University in England, teaches in the English Department at the University of Florida. He is best known for his ballad scholarship. He has published articles in such professional journals as *Folk Music Journal, Folklorica*, and *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, and is a contributor to *Ancient Ballads and Songs* (1973) and *A History of English Balladry* (1973) as well.

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STETSON KENNEDY comes from the Jacksonville area. A prolific author, he has had a professional interest in folk culture since he worked on the Florida Writers' Project with Alton C. Morris. His book *Palmetto Country* (1942), which grew out of the Writers' Project, is regarded by many as a landmark in the history of Florida folklife studies.